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Molière

1622–1673

Jean Baptiste Poquelin (Molière) was born in Paris on January 15, 1622. His father, a well-to-do upholsterer and interior decorator, was a *valet de chambre* to the royal household. The boy's mother died when he was ten.

In 1636 he entered the Collège de Clermont, an aristocratic school that was reputed to be the best in Paris. There he learned logic and rhetoric under the Jesuit teachers and became familiar with Roman comedies. He studied law and could have either practiced that profession or followed his father's. But he had become enthusiastic about the theater and in 1643, when he was twenty-one, helped to found a theatrical company, the *Illustre Théâtre*. He adopted his stage name, Molière. The company, of which the Béjart family was an important part—Madeleine Béjart was its star—rented a tennis court and began to produce plays.

The enterprise was a financial failure, and Molière was imprisoned for debt. The company left Paris to tour the provinces, and Molière went with it. For thirteen years he traveled, mostly through southern France, appearing in this city and that, gaining priceless experience acting in and producing plays. By the time the company returned to Paris, Molière was its director, its leading actor, and the author of two plays of his own.

In 1658 Louis XIV's brother, Phillippe d'Orléans, took the company under his patronage, and from then on its success in Paris was assured. It was given the use of a hall in the Petit-Bourbon, next to the Louvre. Later, when this was torn down, the company performed in the Palais-Royal. The plays of Molière are still produced by the Comédie Française in this building.

Molière presented tragedies by Corneille and others, and he wrote

one tragedy himself. But it was a failure, and it became evident that the company would have to depend on farce and comedy.

In 1662 Molière married Armande Béjart, a member of his company who was only half his age. The marriage was unhappy, for Armande's flirtations seem to have been as frequent, and as public, as Célimène's in *The Misanthrope*.

For the rest of his life Molière turned out, at the rate of nearly two a year, the comedies which have made him famous as France's greatest dramatist. In 1665 the king took over patronage of the company, and thereafter Molière produced many musical entertainments and extravaganzas for the royal family.

Molière suffered during the last half of his life from tuberculosis. In February, 1673, he produced his play, *Le Malade imaginaire* (*The Hypochondriac*), in which he satirized the medical profession. On February 17 he suffered an attack while playing the title role in this play and died that evening. Because he had been an actor, he was refused the last rites of the Church and was buried with a simple ceremony on February 21.

Molière has been called a skeptic. Insofar as it is possible to sum up such a complex person, the word seems to fit him. He questioned the worth of many of the accepted social institutions of his time. Like Swift, he valued reason above emotion, and entertained a low opinion of mankind. His radical ideas found expression in his plays, and some of them were banned by scandalized officials. But his character must have been exceptional, for though he was exposed to calumny and attack such as few men have had to face, nothing mean was ever charged to his personal account.

The Misanthrope was presented on June 4, 1666. It was a relative failure. It has never been a great success on the stage, but it is generally held to be Molière's greatest work.

Seventeenth-century audiences may have found too little to laugh

Notes from the artist: "Molière at his writing desk . . . with a background design based upon the frontispiece of a 1666 edition of Molière's works."



LES
OEUVRES DE
M^r
MOLIERE

TOME
I.

F.

at. The play is a comedy, but there are tragic overtones. Molière himself had reasons for misanthropy. He had been violently attacked, his marriage was unhappy, his first-born son had died after a month, and he was ill and exhausted from overwork. Alceste—played by Molière himself—cries out at the beginning of the play: “I want to be angry! I don’t want to listen!” Critics have found in such remarks as these, and in Alceste’s undeviating demand that the world live up to his ideal, a reflection of Molière’s own feelings.

Whether or not this is true, the play asks questions that might disturb any audience. Alceste’s friend, Philinte, reminds him that the world will not change because he wants it to. Probably everyone has moods, however, in which that fact is not very comforting. Few are willing to lose everything, as Alceste does, for the sake of their ideals. But it is difficult not to agree with Éliante’s judgment that there “is something rather noble and heroic” about Alceste. He is certainly “unreasonable.” But if everyone were “reasonable” about the injustice and hypocrisy of the world, where would we be?

Célimène—who was played by Molière’s young wife—is a masterly creation. She is charming, intelligent, articulate—and she seems to love Alceste. But she is spoiled for him because she does not respond as he does to the world’s evil. She likes the world, she is “reasonable” about hypocrisy, though she certainly does not approve of it, and she is not willing to risk everything on a quixotic pursuit that is bound to fail.

Philinte, too, is masterly. He is the epitome of the man of the world—calm, sensible, a success. There is nothing evil about him; Molière seems to be saying that one can be good and still prosper in life. The relation between the two friends is particularly rich. At the end of the play, Philinte promises to try to save Alceste from himself. We can hope that the two men will mutually improve each other.

Molière is said to have clowned the part of Alceste, to have made him ridiculous, even grotesque. He may have been trying to temper the undeniable sadness of the play. It ends in a way no other great comedy ends: with the stage almost empty, the hero alone, lost, in despair. If the audience wanted to leave the theater laughing, they must have been disappointed.

Molière felt a deep sense of obligation to his audience, and, besides, he wrote and produced plays for a living. He seems to have set to work, as soon as he saw what would be *The Misanthrope’s*

reception, on an old farce which the company may have played in the provinces. The new work appeared on August 6, 1666, with the title *Le Médecin malgré lui* (*The Doctor in Spite of Himself*), and it was an immediate and continuing hit. It is a farce, and Molière loved farces. He himself played the part of Sganarel, and he made the theater ring and the audience howl. The fact that the play satirizes doctors is, perhaps, of little importance. Molière was a great entertainer, and to make an audience happy made him happy, too. *The Doctor in Spite of Himself* has been making audiences happy for three hundred years. It runs second only to *Tartuffe* in the number of recorded performances of Molière's plays.

The play should be read not as an intellectual document but as an entertainment. In particular, the reader might practice his own acting and read it—or parts of it—aloud to himself. The timing of the lines, the look of the actors, the stage “business” that we can imagine being performed—these are the essence of the play. They are what make it wonderful. If it “means” anything, it is that the world, besides being tragicomic, can also be seen as utterly mad.

The Misanthrope

CAST OF CHARACTERS

ALCESTES, *in love with Célimène.*
PHILINTES, *friend to Alcestes.*
ORONTES, *in love with Célimène.*
CÉLIMÈNE, *in love with Alcestes.*
ÈLIANTE, *cousin to Célimène.*
ARSINOË, *friend to Célimène.*
ACASTES, } *Marquises.*
CLITANDER,
BASQUE, *servant to Célimène.*
A GUARD *of the court*
of the marshals of France.
DU BOIS, *servant to Alcestes.*

SCENE: *Paris, in Célimène's house.*

ACT I

SCENE I

Philintes. What's the matter? What ails you?
Alcestes (sitting). Pray leave me.
Philintes. But once more tell me, what whim—
Alcestes. Leave me, I say, and go hide yourself.
Philintes. But you might hear people at least, without being angry.
Alcestes. I will be angry, and I won't hear.

Philintes. I can't comprehend you in your hasty humours; and in short, though a friend, I am one of the first—

Alcestes (*rising hastily*). I, your friend? Strike that out o' your books. I have hitherto professed myself to be so, but after what I have now discovered in you, I flatly declare to you that I am so no longer; I'll have no place in corrupt hearts.

Philintes. I am guilty then, Alcestes, in your account?

Alcestes. Go, you ought to die with mere shame, there's no excusing such an action, and every man of honour ought to be shocked at it. I see you stifle a man with caresses, and profess the utmost tenderness for him; you overcharge the transport of your embraces with protestations, offers, and oaths; and when I afterwards ask you, who is this man, you scarce can tell me what his name is. Your hot fit's all over the moment you are parted, and you treat him, to me, as a person absolutely indifferent. S'death! 'tis an unworthy, base, infamous thing, so far to demean oneself as to act contrary to one's own sentiments. And if, by ill-luck, I had done as much, I should have gone that instant and hanged myself for vexation.

Philintes. I don't see, for my part, that this is a hanging matter, and I shall petition you that you would graciously think fit that I mitigate a little the severity of your sentence, and with your leave, not hang myself for this fact.

Alcestes. How awkwardly this railery sits upon you!

Philintes. But seriously, what would you have one do?

Alcestes. I would have you be sincere, and, like a man of honour, let no word slip which comes not from the heart.

Philintes. When a man comes and embraces you with joy, you should in reason pay him in the same coin, answer his eagerness as one can, return him offer for offer, and oaths for oaths.

Alcestes. No, I can't endure that base method which the generality of your people of mode affect; and I hate nothing so much as the contortions of all those great protestation-mongers, those affable dealers in frivolous embraces, those obliging utterers of empty words, who attack everybody with civilities, and treat the man of worth and the coxcomb with the same air. What good does it do you for a man to caress you, swear amity, faith, zeal, esteem, tenderness, and make a grand eulogium upon you, when he runs to do the same to the first scoundrel he meets? No, no, there's not a soul of the least good disposition will accept an esteem so prostituted, and the most illustrious will have but a poor relish when one finds one is blended with the

whole universe. Esteem is founded on some preference, and to esteem all the world is to esteem nobody. Since you give in to these vices of the times, i'faith you are not calculated to be one of my companions; I refuse the vast complaisance of a heart which makes no difference of merit; I would have people distinguish me; and, to cut the matter short, a friend to all mankind is no friend for me.

Philintes. But whilst we are of the world, 'tis necessary that we pay some outward civilities which custom demands.

Alcestes. No, I tell ye we ought to chastise, without mercy, that shameful commerce of appearances of friendship. I would have us be men, and think that on all occasions the very bottom of our hearts should show itself in our discourse; that it should be that which speaks, and that our sentiments should never be masked under vain compliments.

Philintes. There are a good many occasions in which an absolute frankness would be ridiculous, and hardly be endured; and sometimes, no offence to your austere honour, 'tis right to conceal what we have in our hearts. Would it be proper or decent to tell thousands o' people what we think of 'em? when we have to do with a man we hate, or who is disagreeable to us, ought we to declare the matter to him, just as it is?

Alcestes. Yes.

Philintes. What! would you tell the antiquated Emilia that it ill becomes her, at her age, to set up for a beauty? and that the white she lays on so thick is shocking to everybody?

Alcestes. Without doubt.

Philintes. Or Dorilas, that he's too impertinent? And that there is not an ear at court which he does not tire in recounting his bravery, and the splendour of his family?

Alcestes. Very right.

Philintes. You jest sure.

Alcestes. I don't jest; and I shall spare nobody in this point. My eyes are too much offended; neither court nor city present me with anything but objects to provoke my spleen. It throws me into a melancholy humour, a profound chagrin, when I see men converse together in the manner they do; I find nothing anywhere but base flattery, but injustice, interest, treachery, and knavery; I can hold no longer; I'm distracted and have taken up a resolution to break abruptly with all mankind.

Philintes. This sour philosopher is a little too savage; I can't help laughing

to see you in these gloomy fits; and methinks I see in us two, who have been brought up together, the two brothers which *The School for Husbands* describes, of whom . . .

Alcestes. Pray, let's ha' done with your insipid comparisons.

Philintes. No, truly, leave you off all these rude insults. The world won't alter its ways, for all your pains, and since frankness has such charms with you, I shall tell you frankly that this distemper o' yours is as good as a comedy, wherever you go, and that such a mighty wrath against the manners of the age makes you ridiculous with a great many people.

Alcestes. So much the better, s'death, so much the better; that's what I want, 'tis a good sign, and I'm overjoyed at it; all men are to such a degree odious to me that I should be sorry to be wise in their eyes.

Philintes. You wish very ill then to human nature?

Alcestes. Yes, I have conceived a horrible aversion to it.

Philintes. Shall all poor mortals, without any exception, be involved in this aversion? Besides, are there not some in our age—

Alcestes. No, 'tis general, and I hate all men. Some, because they are wicked and mischievous; and others, for being complaisant to the wicked, and not having that vigorous hatred for 'em which vice ought to give to all virtuous minds. One sees the unjust excess of this complaisance to that sheer villain with whom I have a lawsuit; the treacherous rascal is plainly seen through his mask; he is everywhere known for what he is; his rolling eyes and soft tone impose only upon strangers. People know that this wretched fellow, who richly deserves the gallows, has pushed himself into the world by dirty jobs, and that the splendid condition these have brought him to makes merit repine and virtue blush; whatever shameful titles persons everywhere give him, his wretched honour sees nobody on its side; call him infamous knave and cursed villain, all the world agrees to't, and nobody contradicts it. In the meantime his grimace is everywhere welcome, they entertain him, smile upon him, he insinuates himself into all companies; and if there is any rank to be disputed by canvassing, you'll see him carry it over a man of the greatest worth. Plague! these are to me mortal wounds, to see men keep any measures with vice; I am strongly moved to fly into some desert to avoid all approach of human creatures.

Philintes. Lack-a-day! Let us give ourselves less trouble about the manners of the age, and make some small allowances to human nature; let us

not examine it with so great rigour, but look upon its defects with some indulgence. This world requires a tractable virtue, one may be blameworthy by stress of wisdom, right reason avoids every extremity, and would have us be wise with sobriety. That great stiffness in the virtues of ancient times too much shocks our age and common usage; it would have mortals too perfect; we must yield to the times without obstinacy, and 'tis an extremity of folly to busy ourselves in correcting the world. I observe, as you do, a thousand things every day which might go better taking another course; but whatever I may discover in every transaction, people don't see me in a rage, like you. I take men with great calmness, just as they are; I accustom myself to bear with what they do; and I think that at court, as well as in the city, my phlegm is as much a philosopher as your choler.

Alcestes. But this phlegm, sir, which reasons so nicely, this same phlegm, can nothing ruffle it? Should it happen by chance that a friend should betray you, that a subtle plot were formed to get your estate, or that people should endeavour to spread ill reports of you, could you see all this, without putting yourself in a passion?

Philintes. Yes, I look upon these defects that you make such a noise about as vices linked with human nature; and in short, my mind is no more shocked to see a man a knave, unjust, dishonest, selfish, than to see a vulture ravenous after carnage, apes mischievous, and wolves full of rage.

Alcestes. Shall I see myself betrayed, torn to pieces, robbed, without being—Plague! I won't talk at all, this is such an impertinent way of reasoning.

Philintes. Faith, you will do well to hold your tongue. Exclaim something less against your antagonist, and bestow part of your care on your lawsuit.

Alcestes. I won't bestow any upon it, I have said it.

Philintes. But who then do you expect should solicit for you?

Alcestes. Who do I expect? Reason, my just right, equity.

Philintes. Shall you pay no visit to any of the judges?

Alcestes. No; what, is my cause unjust, or dubious?

Philintes. I grant ye, but canvassing is a plaguy thing, and—

Alcestes. No, I am determined not to move one step. I am in the wrong, or I am in the right.

Philintes. Don't you trust to that.

Alcestes. I shan't stir.

Philintes. Your adversary is strong, and may by caballing draw—

Alcestes. It signifies nothing.

Philinte. You'll be deceived.

Alcestes. Be it so. I'll see the success of it.

Philinte. But—

Alcestes. I shall have the pleasure to lose my suit.

Philinte. But in short—

Alcestes. I shall see by this trial whether men will have impudence enough, will be wicked, villainous, perverse enough to do me injustice in the face of all the world.

Philinte. What a strange man!

Alcestes. I wish, though it cost me a great deal, that for the pleasantness of the thing, I had lost my cause.

Philinte. In good earnest, Alcestes, people would laugh at you, did they hear you talk in this manner.

Alcestes. So much the worse for him that laughed.

Philinte. But this rectitude, which you require in everything with so much exactness, this absolute integrity that you entrench yourself in, do you find it in the person you are in love with? I'm astonished, for my part, that since, as it should seem, you and human nature are by the ears together, yet in spite of all that can render it odious to you, you should have found that in it which charms your eyes. And what surprises me still the more is that strange choice your heart is fixed upon. The sincere Éliante has an inclination for you, the prude Arsinoé casts a sheep's eye upon you; in the meantime your heart rejects their passion, whilst Célimène amuses it in her chains, whose coquettish humour and slanderous temper seem to give in so strongly to the manners of the times. Whence comes it that, bearing so mortal a hatred to these, you should easily bear with such a degree of 'em as this fair one possesses? Are they no longer defects in so sweet an object? Don't you see them? Or do you excuse 'em?

Alcestes. No, the passion I have for this young widow does not shut my eyes against the defects one sees in her, and with what ardour soever she may have inspired me, I am the first to see them, as I am to condemn them. But, with all this, do what I can, I confess my foible, she has the art of pleasing me: in vain I see her faults, in vain I blame them, in spite of me she makes me love her; her agreeableness turns the scale, and without doubt my affection will be able to rid her mind of these vices of the times.

Philinte. If you do that, you do not do a little. You believe then, that you are beloved by her?

Alcestes. Yes, troth, I should not love her at all if I did not think so.

Philinte. But if her affection for you discovers itself plainly, whence comes it that your rivals give you so much uneasiness?

Alceste. 'Tis because a heart thoroughly smitten would have the person wholly to itself; and I come here only with the design of telling her everything my passion inspires me with upon that head.

Philinte. For my part, had I nothing to do but give way to love, her cousin Éliante should have all my sighs; her heart, which esteems you, is solid and sincere; and this choice, which is more agreeable, would be more for your interest.

Alceste. It's true, my reason daily tells me so. But reason is not what governs love.

Philinte. I'm terribly afraid for this love of yours, and the hopes you have may—

SCENE II

Oronte (*to ALCESTE*). I was informed below that Éliante and Célimène were both gone abroad to make some purchase. But as they told me you were here, I came up to assure you, with a sincere heart, that I have conceived an incredible esteem for you; and that for a long time, this esteem has given me an ardent desire to be in the number of your friends. Yes, my heart loves to do justice to merit, and I ardently long that the bond of friendship might unite us. I think that a friend who is zealous, and of my quality too, is certainly not to be rejected. (*During this time ALCESTE appears in a musing posture, and seems not to know that ORONTE speaks to him.*)

Oronte. 'Tis to you (*to ALCESTE*), if you please, that this discourse is addressed.

Alceste. To me, sir?

Oronte. To you. Is it offensive to you?

Alceste. Not at all, but my surprise is very great, and I did not expect the honour I receive.

Oronte. The esteem I hold you in ought not by any means to surprise you; you may claim it from the whole universe.

Alceste. Sir—

Oronte. The whole kingdom contains nothing which is not below the shining merit the world discovers in you.

Alceste. Sir—

Oronte. Yes, for my part, I hold you preferable to everything that I perceive the most considerable in it.

Alcestes. Sir—

Orontes. May the sky crush me if I lie; and, to confirm you in my sentiments, permit me with an open heart to embrace you, and to demand a place in your friendship. Your hand, if you please. You promise me your friendship?

Alcestes. Sir—

Orontes. What! do ye refuse?

Alcestes. Sir, 'tis too much honour you design me. But friendship demands something more of mystery, and 'tis certainly to profane the name to think of bringing it upon all occasions. This union must spring from judgment and choice; before we engage ourselves, 'tis necessary we should be better acquainted, and we may possibly be of such complexions that we may both of us heartily repent of the bargain.

Orontes. Egad, this is talking upon the affair like a man of sense, and I esteem you still the more for it; let us leave it to time then to form so delightful a union. But in the meanwhile, I make you an entire offer of myself; if I am to ask any favour for you at court, the world knows I make some figure near the king; I have his ear, and faith, he always treats me with all the freedom in the world. In short, I am in all respects absolutely yours. And as you are a man of bright parts, I come, by way of commencing this agreeable union, to show you a song which I made a little while ago, and to know whether 'tis fit I should expose it to the public.

Alcestes. Sir, I am a very unfit person to decide the affair; be so good to excuse me.

Orontes. Why so?

Alcestes. I have the weakness of being a little more sincere in this case than I should be.

Orontes. The very thing I ask; I should have room for complaint if exposing myself to you that you might speak without dissimulation, you should deceive me, and hide anything from me in disguise.

Alcestes. Since you are pleased to have it so, sir, I am very willing.

Orontes. A song—'Tis a song. *Hope*—'Tis a lady who had flattered my passion with some hope. *Hope*—These are none of your grand pompous verses, but your slighter verses, soft, tender, and languishing.

Alcestes. We shall see.

Orontes. *Hope*—I don't know whether the style may appear sufficiently clear and easy, and whether you will be satisfied with the choice of the words.

Alcestes. We shall see presently, sir.

Orontes. Besides, you must know that I took up no longer time than a quarter of an hour in making of 'em.

Alcestes. Let us see, sir, the time makes nothing to the purpose.

Orontes.

Hope, for a while, allays, 'tis true,
And rocks to sleep our tedious pain:
But, Phyllis, poor gain must accrue,
When nothing marches in its train.

Philintes. I am charmed already with this little taste.

Alcestes (softly). What! Have you the assurance to admire this?

Orontes.

You showed indeed great complaisance,
Less had been better, take my word;
Why should you be at that expense,
When hope was all you could afford?

Philintes. O! in what gallant terms these things are couched!

Alcestes (softly). O fie! vile complaisance! You praise things that are stupid.

Orontes.

But if an endless expectation,
Push to the last extreme my passion,
Death must be my reliever.
Nor, to prevent this, serves your care;
Fair Phyllis, 'tis downright despair,
When we must hope for ever.

Philintes. The conclusion is pretty, amorous, admirable.

Alcestes (softly). Plague o' your conclusion! Deuce take that poisoned tongue! would you had concluded your head off!

Philintes. I never heard verses so well turned.

Alcestes (softly). S'death—

Orontes (to PHILINTES). You flatter me, and you think perhaps—

Philintes. No, I don't flatter at all.

Alcestes (softly). Heh! What d'ye then, treacherous creature?

Orontes (to ALCESTES). But now for you, you know the agreement we made; pray, speak with sincerity.

Alcestes. Sir, this is always a most delicate affair, and in point of genius, we love people should flatter us. But I was saying one day to a certain person who shall be nameless, seeing some verses of his composition, that it is necessary a fine gentleman should always have a

great command over that itch of writing which we are so apt to catch; that he should keep a strait rein over the great propensity one has to make a show with such amusements; and that people are exposed, by the eagerness of showing their works, to make but a very scurvy figure.

Orontes. What, would you have me understand by this, that I am wrong to pretend—

Alcestes. I don't say that. But I told him that a heavy composition does a person's business, that there needs no other foible to disgrace a man; and that though they had in other respects a hundred fine qualities, yet we view people on their weak sides.

Orontes. D'ye mean that you have any objection to my song?

Alcestes. I don't say that; but that he should not write, I set before his eyes how, in our time, this thirst has spoiled many very worthy people.

Orontes. What, do I write ill? and should I resemble them?

Alcestes. I don't say that. But in short, says I to him, what occasion so urgent have you to rhyme? and who the deuce drives you into print? if one could pardon the sending a bad book into the world, it would only be in those wretches who compose for a livelihood. Take my advice, withstand your present intentions, keep such business as this from public view, and don't throw away what people challenge from you, the reputation which you have at court of a worthy gentleman, to receive by the hands of a greedy printer that of a ridiculous and wretched author. This is what I endeavoured to make him comprehend.

Orontes. Admirably well put; and I think I understand you. But mayn't I know what it is in my song that—

Alcestes. Frankly, 'tis a very good one to lock up in your scrutoire; you have been governed by villainous models, and your expressions are not at all natural.

Pray what is—And rocks to sleep our tedious pain?
 And what—When nothing marches in its train?
 What—Why should you be at that expense,
 When hope was all you could afford?
 And that—Fair Phyllis, 'tis downright despair,
 When we must hope for ever?

This figurative style that people are so vain of is wide of all just character, and of truth; 'tis nothing but playing with words, pure affectation, and 'tis not thus that nature speaks. The wretched taste

of the age in this case is horrible. Our forefathers, unpolished as they were, had a much better one; and I take all this that people admire to be much inferior to an old ballad that I am going to repeat to you:

Had Royal Henry given to me
 His Paris large and fair,
 And I straightway must quit for aye
 The love of my own dear;
 I'd say pardie, my Liege Henry,
 Take back your Paris fair;
 Much mo love I my dear, truly,
 Much mo love I my dear.

The versification is not rich, and the style is antiquated. But don't you see that this is infinitely better than such gewgaw stuff as good sense would despise? And that pure nature speaks here void of art?

Had Royal Henry given to me
 His Paris large and fair,
 And I straightway must quit for aye,
 The love of my own dear;
 I'd say pardie, my Liege Henry,
 Take back your Paris fair;
 Much mo love I my dear, truly,
 Much mo love I my dear.

This is what a heart may say that's really smitten. (*To PHILINTES, laughing.*) Yes, Mr. Sneerer, in spite of all your *beaux esprits*, I value this more than all the flourishing fustian of the tinsel, which people so generally cry up.

Orontes. And I maintain that my verses are very good.

Alcestes. You have your reasons to think 'em so; but you will please to allow me to have others which would be excused from submitting to yours.

Orontes. 'Tis sufficient for me that I see other people value them.

Alcestes. 'Tis because they have the art of dissimulation and I have not.

Orontes. Do you think you have so great a share of wit?

Alcestes. If I commended your verses I should have more.

Orontes. I shall be very well satisfied without your approbation.

Alcestes. 'Twill be very expedient, if you please, that you should be satisfied without it.

Orontes. I should be very glad, for trial, that you would compose some verses upon the same subject after your manner.

Alcestes. I might unluckily make as bad ones; but I should take care how I showed 'em to people.

Orontes. You speak to me with a great deal of assurance, and this sufficiency—

Alcestes. Pray seek somebody else to flatter you, and not me.

Orontes. But, my little sir, don't be so much in your altitudes.

Alcestes. Faith, my great sir, I am just as much in my altitudes as I should be.

Philintes (*stepping between them*). Nay, gentlemen, that is carrying the matter too far, pray have done with it.

Orontes. I'm in the wrong, I confess it, and I quit the place. I am your slave, sir, with all my heart.

Alcestes. And I am, sir, your humble servant.

SCENE III

Philintes. Well, you see; by being too sincere, you had like to have had a troublesome affair upon your hands; and I saw that Orontes wanted to be flattered, when—

Alcestes. Don't speak to me.

Philintes. But—

Alcestes. No more society.

Philintes. 'Tis too much—

Alcestes. Leave me.

Philintes. If I—

Alcestes. No more words.

Philintes. But how—

Alcestes. I hear nothing.

Philintes. But—

Alcestes. Again?

Philintes. This is an outrageous—

Alcestes. S'death, this is too much, don't follow me at the heels.

Philintes. You joke with me; I shan't leave you.

ACT II

SCENE I

Alcestes. Madam, would you have me be plain with you? I am very much dissatisfied with your manner of behaviour: it increases my choler too much when I think of it, and I perceive 'tis necessary we should

break with each other. Yes, I should deceive you to talk otherwise; sooner or later we must break, that's without dispute; and I might promise you the contrary a thousand times, but I should not have it in my power to do it.

Célimène. 'Tis in order to scold me then, I perceive, that you were pleased to wait upon me home?

Alcestes. I don't scold; but your humour, madam, opens too easy an access in your heart to the first-comer; one sees too many lovers laying siege to you, and my mind can by no means be reconciled to this.

Célimène. Will you needs have me to blame for gaining lovers? Can I hinder people from thinking me handsome? And when they make tender efforts to visit me, ought I to take a stick and beat 'em out o' doors?

Alcestes. No, 'tis not a stick, madam, you want, but a heart less yielding, and less melting at their love tales. I know you are surrounded with charms, go where you will, but the reception you give 'em retains the persons your eyes attract; and that gentleness which offers itself to those who throw down their arms finishes in every heart the work which your charms had begun. The too gay hope you inspire 'em with fixes their assiduous attendance about you; and a complaisance in you something less extensive would drive away that great crowd of admirers. But, however, tell me, madam, by what chance your Clitander has the happiness to please you so much? Upon what fund of merit and sublime virtue do you ground the honour of your esteem? Is it by the long nail he has upon his little finger that he has gained the great esteem with you, which we see him have? Did you surrender, with all the *beau monde*, to the shining merit of his fair periwig? Or are they his large pantaloons that make you in love with him? Has the huge collection of ribands the knack of charming you? Is it by the allurement of his vast Rhinegrave that he has gained your heart, whilst he was acting the part of your slave? Or has his manner of laughing and his soft tone of voice found the secret of touching you?

Célimène. How unjustly do you take umbrage at him! Don't you very well know why I keep fair with him? That he can interest all his friends in my lawsuit, as he has actually promised me to do?

Alcestes. Lose your lawsuit, madam, with firmness of mind, and don't keep fair with a rival, who is offensive to me.

Célimène. But you are grown jealous of all the world.

Alcestes. 'Tis because all the world is kindly received by you.

Célimène. That's the very thing which ought to calm that wild spirit of

yours, since my complaisance diffuses itself to all; and you would have more room to be offended, should you see me taken up entirely with one.

Alceste. But as to me whom you blame so much for jealousy, what have I more than the rest of them, pray madam?

Célimène. The happiness to know that you are beloved.

Alceste. But what room has my inflamed heart to believe that?

Célimène. I think that as I have taken the pains to tell you so, a confession of that kind should be sufficient for you.

Alceste. But who shall assure me at the same time that you mayn't say quite as much, perhaps, to everybody else?

Célimène. A pretty, amorous speech this, truly, for a lover to make; and you treat me in a gallant manner here. Well, to remove from you a suspicion of this nature, I here unsay all that I have said; and nothing can deceive you more than yourself. Rest satisfied.

Alceste. S'heart, must I then love you? Oh! could I once again recover this heart o' mine out o' your hands, I would bless Heaven for the singular happiness! I make no secret of it, I do all that's possible to break this cruel attachment of my heart; but my greatest efforts have hitherto done nothing, and 'tis for my sins that I love you thus.

Célimène. 'Tis very true, your love for me is unparalleled.

Alceste. Yes, upon that head I can defy all the world. My love is inconceivable, and never, madam, did any man love as I do.

Célimène. In good truth, the method of it is entirely new, for you love people to pick a quarrel with 'em; and your passion breaks out only in peevish expressions; never did anybody see such a growling lover.

Alceste. But it only sticks with you whether this chagrin shall vanish; I beg of you, let's cut short all our debates, let us converse with open heart, and see to put a stop—

SCENE II

Célimène. What's the matter?

Basque. Acastes is below.

Célimène. Well, bid him come up.

SCENE III

Alceste. What! can one never have a little private conversation with you? Must one find you always ready to receive company? And can't you resolve only for one moment to suffer yourself to be denied?

Célimène. Would you have me quarrel with him?

Alceste. You have that regard for people, which by no means is agreeable to me.

Célimène. He's a man would never forgive me, should he know that his visits had been troublesome to me.

Alceste. And what signifies that to you, to plague yourself in this manner—

Célimène. Lack-a-day! the goodwill of such as he is of importance, and these are a sort of people who have, I don't know how, usurped the privilege of talking loud at court. One sees they introduce themselves into all conversations; they can do you no good, but they may do you harm; and whatever support one may have besides, one should never embroil one's self with these very noisy fellows.

Alceste. In short, be the matter as it will, and whatever foundation one goes upon, you always find reasons to entertain all the world; and the precautions of your judgment—

SCENE IV

Basque. Here's Clitander too, madam.

Alceste. Mighty right.

Célimène. Whither d'ye run?

Alceste. Out o' doors.

Célimène. Stay.

Alceste. What for?

Célimène. Stay.

Alceste. I can't.

Célimène. I would have you.

Alceste. I won't. These conversations do nothing but weary me, and 'tis unreasonable to desire me to endure 'em.

Célimène. I say you shall, you shall.

Alceste. No, 'tis impossible for me.

Célimène. Well, go, begone, you are at your full liberty.

SCENE V

Éliante (*to CÉLIMÈNE*). Here are the two marquises a-coming up with us: did anybody tell you of it?

Célimène. Yes; chairs here for everybody. (*To ALCESTES.*) What, aren't you gone?

Alcestes. No; but I'm resolved, madam, to make you explain your mind, either for them, or for me.

Célimène. Hold your tongue.

Alcestes. You shall explain yourself this very day.

Célimène. You're out o' your wits.

Alcestes. No, you shall declare yourself.

Célimène. Nay—

Alcestes. You must take one side or t'other.

Célimène. You jest, sure.

Alcestes. No, but you must make your choice, I've had patience too long.

Clitander. Egad, madam, I'm just come from court, where Cleontes appeared at the levee most ridiculously finished out. Has he ne'er a friend to give him the light of a little charitable advice upon his behaviour.

Célimène. To say the truth, he loses himself strangely in the world; he carries an air with him wherever he goes that immediately strikes the eye; and when one sees him again, after a short absence, one still finds him more full of his extravagances.

Acastes. Egad, if you must talk of extravagant people, I've just now been teased by a most tedious one: that reasoner Damon, who kept me, an 't please ye, a full hour out o' my chaise, in the heat of the sun.

Célimène. 'Tis a strange tittle-tattle, and then he has always the art, with a great deal of discourse, of saying nothing to you. There's never anything in the arguments he holds, and all we hear is nothing but noise.

Éliante (to PHILINTES). This is no bad beginning. The conversation takes a fine turn enough against one's neighbour.

Clitander. Timantes, too, is an admirable character, madam!

Célimène. 'Tis a mortal, from head to foot, entirely a mystery, who casts a wild glance upon you in passing, and is always busy without anything to do. Everything he utters abounds with grimace; he quite oppresses you by force o' ceremony; he has ever to break off the conversation, a secret to whisper to you, and that secret is—nothing; he makes a miracle of the least trifle, and speaks everything in your ear, even to a good-morrow.

Acastes. And Gerald, madam?

Célimène. O the tedious romancer! He never descends below his grand air of a lord, he's perpetually mingling himself with the highest company, and never cites ye anything less than a duke, a prince or prin-

cess. Quality perfectly turns his head, and all his discourse turns upon nothing but horses, equipage, and dogs; he thou's and thee's people of highest rank, when he speaks to 'em, and the name of Sir is quite obsolete with him.

Clitander. They tell you that he is all in all with Belisa.

Célimène. Poor-spirited wretch! and the driest company! I suffer martyrdom when she comes to visit me. One must sweat perpetually to find out what to say to her, and the barrenness of her expression lets the conversation die at every turn. In vain do you call in the aid of all your commonplace stuff to attack her stupid silence; the fine weather, and the rain, and the cold, and the heat, are funds that one presently drains with her. At the same time, her visits, insupportable enough of 'emselves, are drawn out also to a hideous length; and one may ask what's-a-clock, and yawn twenty times, yet no more will she stir than if she were a log of wood.

Acastes. What think ye of Adrastus?

Célimène. Oh! pride to extremity! a man puffed up with the love of himself; his merit is never satisfied with the court, he makes a daily trade of railing at it, and there's not an employment, charge, or benefice they give away without doing injustice to the considerable person he fancies himself to be.

Clitander. But the young Cleon, whom all the people of fashion now visit, what say you of him?

Célimène. That he has gained his merit from his cook, and 'tis his table that people pay their visits to.

Éliante. He takes care to have the most delicate of provisions served there.

Célimène. Yes, but I should be very glad he would not serve himself up there; that same stupid person of his is a villainous dish, and it spoils, to my taste, all the entertainment he gives you.

Philinte. His uncle Damis is generally very much esteemed; what say you of him, madam?

Célimène. Oh! he's one of my friends.

Philinte. I take him to be a worthy man, and of good sense enough in appearance.

Célimène. Yes—but, what makes me mad is, he will needs have too much wit; he's ever upon the high strain; and one sees him labouring to be witty in everything he says. Since he took it into his head to be that clever man, nothing can hit his taste, he's so difficult; he will needs see faults in everything one writes; and thinks that to praise

is not to be a man of wit; that it is learned to find fault, and that it only belongs to fools to admire and to laugh; and that in not approving any of the works of the age, he gives himself a superiority to all other people. Even in conversation he finds something to carp at, the discourse is too low for him to condescend to; and with his arms across, he looks down with pity from the height of his genius upon all that everybody says.

Acastes. A true portrait of him, split me.

Clitander (to CÉLIMÈNE). You have an admirable hand at painting people to the life.

Alcestes. Courage, steady on, my brave friends of the court, you spare nothing, and every one has his turn. In the meantime, let but any one of these persons appear, and we shall see you run hastily to meet him, give him your hand, and with a flattering kiss back it with oaths that you are his humble servant.

Clitander. Why do you apply yourself to us? If what is said offends you, the charge must be directed to the lady.

Alcestes. No, s'death, 'tis to you; and your fawning laughs draw from her all these slanderous reflections; her satirical humour is constantly fed by the criminal incense of your flattery; her mind would find fewer charms in raillery had she observed that people did not applaud it. Thus 'tis to flatterers that one ought everywhere to impute the vices that overspread human nature.

Philintes. But why so greatly interested for these people, you who would yourself condemn what is blamed in 'em?

Célimène. And must not the gentleman contradict, indeed? Would you have him confine himself to the common opinion? And not display in all places the contradicting spirit that Heaven has blest him with? The sentiment of another can never please him, he always takes the contrary opinion in hand, and he would think he had the appearance of a common person should he be observed to be of anybody's opinion but his own. The honour of contradiction has such charms with him that he very frequently takes up arms against himself, and falls foul on his own sentiments as soon as ever he discovers 'em in the mouth of another.

Alcestes. The laughers are on your side, madam, that's saying everything; and you may push your satire as far as you please against me.

Philintes. But 'tis very true, too, that your way is to bluster at everything one says; and by a peevishness, which itself avows, can neither bear that one should blame or praise.

Alcestes. S'death, 'tis because men are never in the right, because being peevish with 'em is always in season, and because I see that in all affairs they praise impertinently, or censure rashly.

Célimène. But—

Alcestes. No, madam, no, though I were to die for 't, you have diversions that I can't bear with; and they are in the wrong here to cherish in your mind that strong adherence to faults which they themselves blame in you.

Clitander. For my part, I don't know; but I loudly declare I always thought hitherto that the lady was without fault.

Acastes. With graces and attractions I see her well stored, but for faults, they don't fall under my observation.

Alcestes. But they do under mine, and so far am I from concealing 'em, she knows I take care to reproach her with 'em. The more we love any person, the less we should flatter them; true love shows itself by giving no quarter; and for my part, I would banish all those mean-spirited lovers, whom I found submissive to all my sentiments, and whose faint-hearted complaisance would offer incense to all my extravagances.

Célimène. In short, were you to be umpire of hearts, to be rightly in love, one ought to renounce all tenderness, and to place the supreme honour of a perfect passion in railing handsomely at the persons we love.

Eliante. Love, for the generality, is but little regulated by these rules, and lovers are always observed to extol their choice. Never does their passion see anything to be blamed in it, and everything to them becomes amiable in the object beloved; they reckon blemishes as perfections, and know how to give favourable names to 'em. The pale vies with the jessamy in fairness, the black, even to a frightful degree, is an adorable brunette; the lean has shape and easiness; the fat has a portliness full of majesty; the naturally slattern, who has few charms, is placed under the name of a negligent beauty; the giant is a goddess in their eyes; the dwarf an epitome of all Heaven's wonders; the haughty has a soul worthy of a diadem; the cheat has wit; the fool is all good nature; the over-talkative has agreeable humour; and the dumb preserves a decent modesty. 'Tis thus that a lover, in the extremity of his passion, loves even the very faults of those he is enamoured with.

Alcestes. And, for my part, I maintain—

Célimène. Let's drop this discourse, and take a turn or two in the gallery.

What! are you going, gentlemen?

Clitander and Acastes. No, madam.

Alcestes. You are mightily taken up with the fear of their going; go when you please, gentlemen; but I give you notice that I shan't go hence till you are gone.

Acastes. Did I not think I should be troublesome to the lady, I have nothing to call me hence the whole day.

Clitander. As for me, provided I am but soon enough to attend the king at his going to bed, I have no affair else to engage me.

Célimène (to ALCESTES). You only joke, I fancy.

Alcestes. No, not in the least. We shall see whether I am the person you want to have gone.

SCENE VI

Basque (to ALCESTES). Sir, here's a man wants to speak with you about an affair which he says will admit of no delay.

Alcestes. Tell him, I have no such urgent affairs.

Basque. He has a jacket on with large plaited skirts, laced with gold lace.

Célimène (to ALCESTES). Go see what he wants, or bid him come in.

SCENE VII

Alcestes (going up to the Guard). Well then, what's your pleasure? come hither, sir.

Guard. Sir, I want to speak a word or two with you.

Alcestes. You may speak aloud, sir, to let me know what it is.

Guard. The marshals of France, whose commands I am charged with, order you, sir, to come and appear before them immediately.

Alcestes. Who? me, sir?

Guard. Yourself, sir.

Alcestes. And what for?

Philinte (to ALCESTES). 'Tis the ridiculous affair between you and Orontes.

Célimène (to PHILINTE). How?

Philinte. Orontes and he affronted one another just now about some trifling verses he did not approve of, and they want to quash the thing in its infancy.

Alcestes. I shall never show any base compliance.

Philinte. But you must obey order, come, get ready—

Alcestes. What accommodation would they propose between us? Shall the vote of these gentlemen condemn me to approve the verses

which are the occasion of our quarrel? I won't unsay what I have said; I think 'em villainous.

Philinte. But you should with more temper—

Alceste. I shan't abate an ace of it, the verses are execrable.

Philinte. You should show yourself tractable in your sentiments. Come, let's away.

Alceste. I'll go, but nothing shall prevail upon me to retract.

Philinte. Come, we shall show you.

Alceste. Unless an express command comes from the king for me to approve the verses about which there's such a bustle, egad, I shall ever maintain that they are wretched, and that a man deserves hanging for having made 'em. (*To CLITANDER and ACASTES, who laugh.*) S'heart, gentlemen, I did not think to be so diverting as I am.

Célimène. Go quickly, and make your appearance where you should.

Alceste. I am going thither, madam, and I shall return hither immediately to decide our debates.

ACT III

SCENE I

Clitander. Dear marquis, I see thou art absolutely at ease, everything makes thee gay, and nothing discomposes thee. Dost thou think i' good faith, if thou hast not lost thy eyesight, that thou hast any mighty reason to appear so joyful?

Acastes. Egad, I don't see when I examine myself where I can pick out any reason to be melancholy. I have a fortune, I'm young and spring from a family which, with some reason, may style itself noble; and I think, by the rank my extraction gives me, that there are very few employments which I don't stand fair for; as to courage, which we ought to value above everything, the world knows without vanity that I don't lack it; and the world has seen me push an affair in life after a vigorous and gallant manner enough. For wit, doubtless I have it, with a good taste too, to judge and reason upon everything without study; to make a learned figure in the playhouse when anything new comes out which I am fond of to idolatry, to decide there in chief, and set the whole house in an uproar at all the fine passages that deserve a clap. I'm adroit enough, I've a good air, a good mien, above all a handsome set of teeth, and a very fine shape. As to dressing well, I think, without flattering myself, he would be very

unlucky who should dispute it with me. I am in great esteem, as great as a man can be, beloved by the fair sex, and well with my prince. I do think that with all this, my dear marquis, I do verily think a man might rest mighty well satisfied with himself in any country of the world.

Clitander. Yes, but finding conquests so easy elsewhere, why do you sigh here to no purpose?

Acastes. I? 'fore gad I'm not of the make nor humour to endure the indifference of a fine lady. 'Tis enough for awkward people, for vulgar merit, to burn with constancy for your severe beauties; to languish at their feet, and be passive under their cruelty; to seek relief from sighs and tears, and endeavour by dancing a careful long attendance to obtain what is denied to their merit. But people of my air, marquis, are not made to love upon credit, and be at the whole expense. How extraordinary soever the merit of the fair may be, I'm of opinion, thank Heaven, that we have our value as well as they, and that 'tis not reason sufficient to be honoured with a heart like mine that it costs 'em nothing; and, at least to place everything in its just balance, 'tis fitting advances ought to be made at a common expense.

Clitander. 'Tis therefore thy opinion, marquis, that thou art very well here!

Acastes. I have some room, marquis, to think so.

Clitander. Believe me, and ha' done with that extreme mistake; you flatter yourself, my dear, and put out your own eyes.

Acastes. 'Tis true, I flatter myself, really I do put out my own eyes.

Clitander. But who makes you judge yourself so perfectly happy?

Acastes. I flatter myself.

Clitander. What d'ye found your conjectures upon?

Acastes. I do put out my own eyes.

Clitander. Have you pretty sure proof of it?

Acastes. I impose upon myself, I tell you.

Clitander. May Célimène have made any secret acknowledgment of her passion?

Acastes. No, I am cruelly used.

Clitander. Prithee, answer me.

Acastes. I meet with nothing but rebuffs.

Clitander. Ha' done with this railery, and tell me what hopes she may have given you.

Acastes. I am the wretch, and thou the fortunate man; she has an utter aversion to my person, and I must hang myself some o' these days.

Clitander. Come on then, are you willing, marquis, that, to adjust our love affairs, we should both unanimously determine upon one thing? That he who can show a certain mark of having the greater share in Célimène's heart, the other shall here give place to the pretended conqueror, and set him free from a continual rival?

Acastes. Egad, this is a language exactly to my taste, and I do from the bottom of my heart agree to it. But hush.

SCENE II

Célimène. Here still?

Clitander. Love, madam, detains us.

Célimène. I just now heard a coach enter below, do you know who it is?

Clitander. No.

SCENE III

Basque. Arsinoé, madam, is coming up to see you.

Célimène. What would the woman have with me?

Basque. Éliante is there below to entertain her.

Célimène. What's in her head? And who sends for her?

Acastes. She passes in all places for a consummated prude; and the ardour of her zeal—

Célimène. Yes, yes, mere grimace. In her soul she's one of this world, and all her cares are bent to hook in somebody, without being able to compass it. She can't look but with an envious eye upon the professed humble servants who are followers of any other lady; and, her forlorn merit being abandoned by everybody, is perpetually a-raving against the blindness of the age. She endeavours under the sham veil of prudery to conceal that hideous solitude which one sees in her house; and to save the credit of her feeble charms she would fix a crime upon everything out of their power. At the same time, a spark would highly please the dame; and she has a sneaking kindness even for Alceste. The court he pays me is an insult upon her charms; she will have it a kind of robbery that I commit upon her. And her jealous spite, which she hides with great difficulty, gives underhand a fling against me in all places where she comes. In short, I never saw anything, to my fancy, so stupid; she is to a supreme degree impertinent, and—

SCENE IV

Célimène. Hah! What propitious fortune has brought you hither, madam?

Sincerely I was in pain about you.

Arsinoé. I come to give you some intelligence which I thought I owed you.

Célimène. Oh! my stars! how glad am I to see you!

Exeunt Clitander and Acastes laughing.

SCENE V

Arsinoé. They could not have gone away more apropos.

Célimène. Shall we sit down?

Arsinoé. 'Tis not at all necessary. Friendship, madam, ought, above all, to display itself in those things which may be of most importance to us. And as nothing can be of greater importance than honour and decorum, I come to testify the friendship I have for you by a piece of intelligence which touches your honour. Yesterday I was a-visiting some people of singular virtue, where they turned the subject of the discourse upon you: and there your conduct, madam, with all its mighty show, had the misfortune not to be commended. That crowd o' people whose visits you admit of, your gallantry, and the rumours it excites found censurers more than it should have done, and more rigorous than I could have wished. You may well think what side I took. I did everything in my power to defend you; I strongly excused you, on the foot of your intention, and would be bound for the honesty of your mind. But you know there are certain things in life which one cannot excuse, however desirous one may be to do it. And I was obliged to grant that the air with which you live did you some injury. That it had but an ill face in the eyes of the world, that there are no stories so ill-natured but are everywhere raised about it, and that, if you pleased, your whole deportment might give less handle to uncharitable judges. Not that I believe at the bottom your virtue touched; Heaven preserve me from entertaining such a thought! But folks easily give credit to the shadow of a crime, and 'tis not enough for us to live well, as to ourselves. I believe you, madam, to be of too considerate a spirit not to take in good part this profitable advice, and to attribute it to the secret motions of a zeal which gives me a thorough attachment to all your interests.

Célimène. Madam, I have a great many thanks to return you. Such intelligence obliges me: and so far from taking it ill, I design this instant to acknowledge the favour by a piece of intelligence which touches your honour too; and as I see you discover yourself my friend by informing me of the reports that people spread about me, I shall in my turn follow so kind an example by acquainting you what 'tis people say of you. In a certain place, where I was a-visiting t'other day, I met with some people of most extraordinary merit, who, speaking of the true pains a person takes who lives virtuously, turned the conversation, madam, upon you. There your prudery and your violent zeal were not by any means cited as a good model: that affectation of an exterior gravity; your everlasting discourses about wisdom and honour; your grimaces and outcries at the shadow of an indecency, which yet may have all the innocence of an expression only ambiguous; that high esteem you are in with yourself, and the eye of pity you cast upon everybody else; your frequent lectures and keen censures on things that are innocent and pure. All this, madam, if I may speak frankly to you, was blamed by common consent. To what purpose, said they, that modest look, that sage outside, that gives the lie to all the rest? She's exact at her prayers to the utmost punctilio, but she beats her servants, and pays 'em no wages. She makes a show of huge zeal in all places of devotion, but she paints, and wants to appear handsome; she can't bear the sight of anything naked in a picture, but has a mighty love for realities. For my part, I undertook your defence against 'em every one, and positively assured 'em 'twas all scandal; but the whole run of their opinions went against me, and their conclusion was that you would do well to be less solicitous about the actions of others, and take a little pains about your own. That one ought to look a great while into oneself before we think of condemning other people; that one should add the weight of an exemplary life to the corrections we pretend to make in our neighbours; and that 'twould be still better to refer ourselves in this business to those whom Heaven has committed the care of it to. I believe also, madam, you are of too considerate a spirit not to take in good part this useful intelligence, and to attribute it to the secret motions of a zeal which gives me a thorough attachment to all your interests.

Arsinoé. Whatever we may be exposed to in our reproofs, I did not expect, madam, such a reply as this; and I see plainly, by the sharpness there is in it, that my sincere advice has touched you to the quick.

Célimène. Quite the contrary, madam; and if people were but wise, these

mutual cautions would be brought more into fashion; they would put an end by this frank treatment of each other, to that great blindness which all are under in respect to themselves. It will be entirely your fault if we do not continue this honest office with the same zeal, and do not take great care to compare notes as to what we hear of each other, you of me, I of you.

Arsinoé. Ah! madam, I can hear nothing of you, 'tis in me that a great deal is to be found fault with.

Célimène. Madam, one may, I believe, praise or blame everything, and everybody may have their reason according to their age or taste. There is a season for gallantry, and there is one also proper for prudery. One may out of policy choose that when the glory of our youthful years is faded. That serves to cover some vexatious misfortunes. I don't say but I may, one time or other, follow your steps; age brings about everything; but 'tis not the time, madam, as every one knows, to be a prude at twenty.

Arsinoé. Really you plume yourself upon a very trifling advantage, and make a hideous noise with your age. Whatever mine may be more than yours, 'tis no such mighty matter to value yourself so much upon it; and I can't imagine, madam, why you should put yourself into such a heat, and lash me in the strange manner you do.

Célimène. No more can I imagine, madam, why you are observed to inveigh so bitterly against me in all places; must you be eternally revenging your vexations upon me? And how can I help it if folks won't make love to you? If my person captivates people, and they continue daily to make me those addresses from which you may wish they would desist, I don't know what to do in this case, and 'tis not my fault. You have a clear stage, and 'tis not I that prevents your having charms to attract them.

Arsinoé. Alas! And do ye think I give myself any pain about the number of lovers which you are so vain of? And is it not very easy to judge at what price one may engage 'em nowadays? D'ye think to make one believe, as we see how things go, that your merit alone draws this crowd together? That they only burn for you with an honourable passion, and that they all make court to you on the score of your virtue? People are not blinded by vain pretences, the world is no dupe, and I see people who are formed with the power of inspiring tender sentiments who nevertheless don't gather sparks to their houses: from thence we may draw consequences that one does not win their hearts without great advances; that nobody is our admirer only for

the beauty of our eyes; and that we must pay for the court that's made to us. Therefore don't puff yourself up so much with glory for the trifling tinsel of a poor victory: correct a little the pride of your charms, and don't treat people with contempt on that account. Should our eyes envy yours their conquests, I fancy we might do as other people do, be under no restraint, and let you plainly see that one has lovers when one has a mind to have 'em.

Célimène. Have 'em then, madam, and let's see this affair; labour hard by this extraordinary secret to please: and without—

Arsinoé. Let us break off this kind of conversation, madam, it would transport both your temper and mine too far; and I should have already taken my leave, as I ought to do, had not my coach obliged me to wait longer.

Célimène. You are at liberty to stay, madam, as long as you please, and nothing should hurry you on that account; but, without fatiguing you with ceremony to me, I am going to give you better company; and this gentleman whom chance has brought hither apropos will better supply my place in entertaining you.

SCENE VI

Célimène. Alcestes, I must go write a line or two of a letter, which I can defer no longer without doing myself an injury: please to stay with the lady, she will easily be so good as to excuse my incivility.

SCENE VII

Arsinoé. You see she desires I would entertain you whilst I wait a moment till my coach comes; and never could all her care offer me anything more charming than such a conversation. Indeed persons of sublime merit attract the love and esteem of everybody; and doubtless yours has hidden charms that influence my heart so as to enter into all your interests. I wish the court, by a propitious regard, would do more justice to your worth. You have reason to complain, and I am out of all patience when I daily see that they don't do anything for you.

Alceste. Me, madam? and what pretensions have I to anything? what service have I done the state? What have I done, pray, so illustrious in itself, that I should complain of the court that they do nothing for me?

Arsinoé. All those on whom the court casts a propitious eye have not always performed such famous services; there must be opportunity as well as power; and in short the merit you discover ought—

Alcestes. Lack-a-day! No more of my merit, for goodness' sake; what are you for having the court perplex itself about? It would have enough to do, and a plaguy deal o' care upon its hands, to have people's merit to bring to light.

Arsinoé. Illustrious merit brings itself to light; yours is extremely valued in many places, and you may take it from me that in two considerable places you were yesterday extolled by people of great consequence.

Alcestes. Why, madam, all the world are made fools of nowadays, and there's nothing but what the present age confounds by that means; every man has equally great merit bestowed upon him, 'tis no longer an honour to be praised; one's sick o' panegyrics, and throws 'em back in people's faces, even my *valet-de-chambre* is put into the gazette.

Arsinoé. For my part, I could heartily wish, the better to show yourself, that an employment at court could allure you. Would you but discover the least inclination that way, one may set many engines at work to serve you, and I have persons at beck whom I'll employ for you, who can make your way easy to everything.

Alcestes. And what would you have me do there, madam? The humour I am of requires me to banish myself thence; Heaven, when it sent me into the world, never made me a soul compatible with the air of a court. I don't find in myself the virtues necessary to succeed well, and make my fortune there. My chief talent is to be frank and sincere: I don't know how to cajole people in conversation; and he who has not the gift of concealing his thoughts ought to make but a very short stay in that country. Out of a court, one has not that interest, doubtless, and those titles of honour, which it gives at present; but at the same time, in losing these advantages, one has not the vexation of acting very scurvy parts. One has not a thousand cruel rebuffs to suffer, one has not Mr. Such-a-one's verses to praise, nor my Lady Such-a-one to flatter, nor to bear with the skull of a true marquis.

Arsinoé. Let us drop this discourse of a court, since you are so pleased; but I must pity you in your amour, and that you may have my thoughts on that subject, I could heartily wish your affections were better placed: you deserve, without doubt, a much happier fate, and she whom you are charmed with is unworthy of you.

Alcestes. But pray, madam, consider, when you say so, that this person is your friend.

Arsinoé. Yes; but it really goes against my conscience to suffer any longer the wrong she does you; the situation I see you in gives me too sensible an affliction, and I give you notice that you are abused in your love.

Alcestes. 'Tis discovering a great tenderness for me, madam, and such intelligence is obliging to a lover.

Arsinoé. Yes, for all she is my friend, she is, and I say she is unworthy to enslave the heart of a man of honour, and that hers entertains no more than a dissembled kindness for you.

Alcestes. That may be, madam, one cannot see through people's hearts; but your charity might well have forborne throwing such a suspicion into mine.

Arsinoé. If you won't be undeceived, I shall e'en say no more to you, that's easy enough.

Alcestes. No, but on such a subject as this, whatever you expose us to, doubts are of all things the most tormenting: and for my part, I should be glad you would inform me of nothing but what you can plainly make appear to me.

Arsinoé. Well, enough is said, and you are going to receive full light into this matter. Yes, I am willing your eyes should convince you of everything, only give me your hand as far as my house. There I shall let you see a faithful proof of the infidelity of your fair one's heart: and if yours can be smitten with any other eyes, one may, perhaps, offer you something to give you consolation.

ACT IV

SCENE I

Philinte. No, never was there a soul seen of so obstinate a make, nor an accommodation more difficult to be brought about; in vain did they endeavour to wind and turn him all ways, there was no drawing him from his opinion, and, in my thoughts, never did so whimsical a difference employ the prudence of these gentlemen. "No, gentlemen," said he, "I won't retract, and shall agree to anything, barring this point. What is he affronted at? And what would he have me say? What is it over with him as to honour, if he can't write well? What

harm did my advice do him, which he took so heinously? One may be a worthy man and write bad verses; these affairs touch not at all upon the point of honour. I esteem him a gallant man in all respects, a man of quality, of merit, and courage, everything you please, but he's a very bad author. I'll praise, if you please, his train and his expense, his skill in horsemanship, in arms, in dancing. But for commanding his verses, I am his humble servant; and when one has not the happiness to write well in that way, one should have no itch after rhyming, on pain of being cast for one's life." In short, all the favour and agreement that he could, with the utmost efforts, bring himself to stoop to, was to say (thinking to soften his style greatly), "Sir, I am sorry I am so difficult to please; and out of respect to you, I could have wished with all my soul to have thought your late song better"; and to conclude, they obliged 'em to close the whole proceeding in an embrace.

Éliante. He is very singular in his way of acting, but I have, I own it, a particular value for him: and the sincerity he piques himself upon has something noble and heroic in it. 'Tis a virtue very rare in this present age, and I could wish to see it in everybody as it is in him.

Philintes. For my part, the more I see him the more am I astonished at this passion he so abandons himself to. Being of the humour Heaven has formed him with, I can't imagine how he takes it into his head to be in love; and less still can I imagine how your cousin should be the person his fancy inclines him to.

Éliante. This lets us sufficiently see that love is not always the product of a resemblance of humours; and in this example all those accounts of tender sympathies are falsified.

Philintes. But d'ye think, by what appears, that she loves him?

Éliante. That's a point not very easy to be known. How can one judge whether she loves him in reality? That heart of hers is not, even itself, very sure what it thinks; it loves sometimes without knowing very well why, and fancies too at other times that it loves when there is nothing in't.

Philintes. I believe our friend will find more vexation with this cousin o' yours than he imagines; and to say the truth, had he my heart he would turn his addresses quite to another quarter; and we should see him, madam, by a choice much more just, make his use of the kindness you discover for him.

Éliante. For my part, I use no disguise in the matter, and I think one

should be sincere in these points. I don't oppose his passion at all; on the contrary I interest myself in it: and if the thing stuck only at me, I myself, the world should see, would join him to her he loves; but if in such a choice, as it possibly may happen, his passion should try its fate another way, and it must be so that he should make somebody else happy, I could resolve upon receiving his addresses; and his being refused in such an affair would not create in me any aversion to him.

Philinte. And I, madam, on my part, do not at all oppose that kindness your beauty entertains for him: and he himself, if he please, can fully acquaint you with what I have taken care to tell him upon this subject. But if by their being united in marriage, you should be out of a capacity of receiving his addresses, all mine should attempt that glorious favour, which with so much goodness you present him with. Happy, madam, if when your heart can withdraw itself from him, it might but fall to my share.

Éliante. You are pleased to be merry, Philinte.

Philinte. No, madam, I speak now from the bottom of my soul; I wait the occasion of making you an offer without reserve, and with all my wishes impatiently wait for that moment.

SCENE II

Alceste. Ah! madam, do me justice for an offence which has just now triumphed over all my constancy.

Éliante. What's the matter? what has disturbed you?

Alceste. Something ails me, which 'tis death to think of; and the dissolution of all nature had not oppressed me like this adventure. 'Tis over with me—my love—I can't speak.

Éliante. Endeavour to recover your spirits a little.

Alceste. O just Heaven! must the odious vices of the basest minds be joined to so many charms?

Éliante. But pray who can—

Alceste. Ah! all is ruined, I am, I am betrayed, I am murdered. Célimène—could one have believed this news? Célimène deceives me, and is no better than a faithless wretch.

Éliante. Have you just grounds to believe it?

Philinte. Perhaps 'tis a suspicion lightly conceived; your jealous temper sometimes takes chimeras—

Alceste. Oh! s'death, sir, meddle you with your own affairs. (*To ÉLIANTE.*) 'Tis being but too certain of her treachery, to have a let-

ter in my pocket under her own hand. Yes, madam, a letter writ to Orontes has set before my eyes my disgrace, and her shame. Orontes, whose addresses I thought she avoided, and whom I dreaded the least of all my rivals.

Philinte. A letter may deceive us by appearance, and is not so culpable sometimes as one thinks it.

Alceste. Once more, sir, pray leave me, and trouble yourself only about your own concerns.

Éliante. You should moderate your passion, and the injury—

Alceste. This work, madam, belongs to you, 'tis to you that my heart has now recourse for power to free itself from this galling affliction. Revenge me of your ungrateful and perfidious relation, who basely betrays so constant a passion; revenge me for this stroke which ought to raise your horror.

Éliante. I revenge you! How?

Alceste. In receiving my heart. Accept it, madam, in room of the faithless creature: 'tis that way I can take vengeance on her; and I will punish her by the sincere addresses, by the profound love, the respectful concern, the earnest devoirs, and the assiduous service, which this heart shall offer you as an ardent sacrifice.

Éliante. I sympathize with you, doubtless, in what you suffer, and don't despise the heart you offer me; but perhaps the harm is not so great as you think it, and you may lay aside this desire of vengeance; when the injury proceeds from an object full of charms, one forms many designs one never executes. In vain do we see powerful reason to part, the beloved criminal is presently innocent; all the harm we wish easily vanishes, and 'tis very well known what the anger of a lover is.

Alceste. No, no, madam, no. The crime is mortal, there's no return, and I absolutely break with her; nothing shall change the resolution I have fixed of doing it, and I should be my own tormentor ever to love her more. Here she is; my passion doubles at her approach. I'll go reproach her in the most lively manner for her black ingratitude, absolutely confound her, and after that bring you back a heart entirely disengaged from her delusive charms.

SCENE III

Alceste (aside). Oh Heaven! can I be now master of my transports?

Célimène (aside). Hey, hey! (*To ALCESTES.*) What confusion is this you are in? What means that sighing, and those gloomy looks you cast upon me?

Alceste. That all the horrors a soul is capable of have nothing in them comparable to your perfidies; that fate, devils, and incensed Heaven never produced anything so wicked as yourself.

Célimène. This is certainly an admirable way of courtship.

Alceste. Nay, none of your jests, 'tis no time to laugh; much rather blush, you have reason for it. I have sure proofs of your treachery. This is what the perplexities of my heart had pointed out; 'twas not in vain that my affection was alarmed. By those frequent suspicions, which you abhorred, I searched after the misfortune my eyes have hit upon; and in spite of all your caution and address in dissimulation, my genius hinted to me what I had to fear; but don't presume that I shall endure the vexation of seeing myself outrageously abused without being revenged. I know that one has no power over one's inclinations, that love will always spring up independent; that one can never take possession of a heart by force, and that every mind is free to name its conqueror. Accordingly I should have had no reason of complaint, had you explained to me without dissimulation; and though you had rejected my addresses at the first sight, my heart had had no right of taxing anything but fortune. But to have my passion applauded by a deceitful confession, 'tis a treachery, 'tis a perfidy, which can't meet with too great a punishment; and I shall give full swing to my resentments. Yes, yes, after such an outrage dread everything that can happen. I am no more myself, I am all rage. Pierced by the mortal wound which you have given me, my senses are no longer under the government of reason; I yield to the motions of a just fury, and shall not answer for what I may do.

Célimène. Whence then, I pray, proceeds such raving? Tell me, have you lost your senses?

Alceste. Yes, yes, I lost 'em, when on sight of you I imbibed, to my misfortune, the poison which kills me, and when I thought of finding any sincerity in the treacherous charms with which I was enchanted.

Célimène. What treachery then can you complain of?

Alceste. Oh! the double heart, how well it knows the art of dissimulation! But I have the means ready at hand to drive it to its last shifts; cast your eyes here, and know the strokes of your own pen; the discovery of this letter is sufficient to confound you, and against this evidence you can have nothing to answer.

Célimène. And this is the thing that ruffles your spirits?

Alceste. Don't you blush at sight of this writing?

Célimène. And for what reason should I blush at it?

Alcestes. How! Do you add assurance to artifice? Will you disown it because it is not signed?

Célimène. Why disown a letter of my own handwriting?

Alcestes. And can you look upon it without being in confusion at the crime of which the whole tenor of it accuses you?

Célimène. You are in truth a most extravagant mortal.

Alcestes. What? Do you thus outbrave this convincing proof? And has that which lets me see your tenderness for Orontes, nothing in it injurious to me, and shameful to you?

Célimène. Orontes! Who told you that the letter is for him?

Alcestes. The persons who this day put it into my hands. But I'm willing to grant that it should be for another; has my heart the less reason to complain of yours? Will you in reality, be less culpable towards me, on that account?

Célimène. But if 'tis a woman this letter is written to, wherein does it hurt you? and what is there culpable in it?

Alcestes. Ha! the turn is good, and the excuse admirable; I was not thinking of this stroke, I own it. And here I am absolutely convicted. Dare you have recourse to these gross impositions? and d'ye think people have lost their eyes? Let's see, let's see a little in what way, with what air, you will support a falsity so palpable; and how can you misapply all the words of a letter which shows so much passion, to a woman? To cover your want of constancy, adjust what I'm going to read—

Célimène. I've no mind to't. You are very merry to take such command upon you, and to tell me flatly to my face what you dare to tell me.

Alcestes. No, without being in a passion, take a little pains to justify the terms here.

Célimène. No, I won't do it; and in this accident, whatever you think is of little importance to me.

Alcestes. Pray, show me, I shall be satisfied, if you can but explain this letter for a woman.

Célimène. No, 'tis for Orontes, and I would have you think so; I receive all his addresses with the greatest joy. I admire his discourse, I esteem his person, and I agree to whatever you please. Do, quarrel, let nothing stop you, and don't torment me any more.

Alcestes (aside). Heavens! Can anything be invented more cruel? And was ever heart treated in this manner? What! Here I am justly in a passion with her, 'tis I come to make my complaints, and I must bear

the blame! She aggravates to the last degree my sorrow, and my suspicions; she suffers me to believe everything, and glories in everything; and at the same time, my heart is still cowardly enough not to break the chain that binds it, not to arm itself with a generous disdain against the ungrateful object it is but too much smitten with! (*To CÉLIMÈNE.*) Ah! perfidious creature! how well you know to make your advantage of my extreme weakness even against myself, and manage to your own ends that prodigious excess of this fatal love which took rise from those traitorous eyes! Clear yourself at least from the crime which bears too hard upon me, and no longer affect being guilty of it. If it can be done, make me this letter innocent; my fondness consents to lend you a helping hand. Strive to appear true in this case, and I will strive to believe you such.

Célimène. Go, you are a fool with your jealous transports, and don't deserve the love one has for you. I would know, who could oblige me to descend to the baseness of dissembling with you? And why, if my heart inclined another way, I should not with sincerity tell you so? What! does not the obliging assurance of my sentiments defend me sufficiently against all your suspicions? Are they of any weight against such security? Is it not affronting me to hearken to 'em? And since our heart makes the utmost effort when it can resolve to confess it loves; since the honour of the sex, that enemy to love, so strongly opposes such like confessions; should the lover, who sees us get over such an obstacle for his sake, with impunity suspect that oracle? And is it not a crime not to rest secure of that which one cannot declare but after great struggles with oneself? Go, such suspicions deserve my indignation, and you are not worth one's giving oneself any concern about. I am a fool, and am heartily vexed at my simplicity for still retaining any kindness for you; I ought to fix my esteem somewhere else, and give you just reason to complain of me.

Alcestes. Ah, traitress! How strange is my weakness for you! You certainly deceive me with these tender expressions; but it signifies nothing, I must follow my destiny, my soul's entirely resigned to your fidelity, I must see to the last what your heart will prove, and whether it can form so black a design as to deceive me.

Célimène. No, you don't love me as you ought to love.

Alcestes. Oh! nothing is comparable to the extremity of my passion; and in the zeal I have to show this to all the world, I go so far as to form wishes against you. Yes, I could wish that no person thought you amiable, that you were reduced to a miserable condition, that

Heaven at your infancy had bestowed nothing upon you, that you had had neither rank, birth, nor fortune, so that I might, by a more distinguishing sacrifice of my heart, have made you reparation for the injustice of such a fate; and that I might at this time have had the joy and the glory of seeing you receive your all at the hands of my love.

Célimène. This is wishing one well after a strange manner! Preserve me Heaven from your ever having occasion—Here comes Master Du Bois, ridiculously equipped.

SCENE IV

Alceste. What means this equipage, and this frightful air? What's the matter with you?

Du Bois. Sir—

Alceste. Well?

Du Bois. Strange things in abundance.

Alceste. What is it?

Du Bois. We are scurvily situated, sir, in our affairs.

Alceste. How?

Du Bois. Shall I speak aloud?

Alceste. Yes, speak quickly.

Du Bois. Isn't there somebody here—

Alceste. Pooh, what trifling is here! Will you speak?

Du Bois. Sir, you must step aside.

Alceste. How?

Du Bois. We must decamp without beat o' drum.

Alceste. And why?

Du Bois. I tell you we must quit this place.

Alceste. The cause?

Du Bois. We must depart, sir, without taking leave.

Alceste. But for what reason all this stuff?

Du Bois. By reason, sir, that we must pack and away.

Alceste. Plague! I shall infallibly crack your skull, rascal, if you don't explain yourself in another manner.

Du Bois. Sir, a fellow with a black dress and phiz came quite into the kitchen, to leave with us a paper scribbled after such a manner that a man had need be more cunning than the devil to read it. I make no manner o' doubt, but 'tis about your lawsuit; but Beelzebub himself, I believe, could not find it out.

Alcestes. Well! How! What does this paper discover, traitor, with respect to our departure you spoke of just now?

Du Bois. 'Tis to tell you, sir, as how an hour afterwards, a man who comes often to visit you came very earnestly to see for you, and not finding you, charged me softly, knowing that I am a very faithful servant, to tell you—stay, what d'ye call his name?

Alcestes. Ha' done with his name, rascal, and tell me what he said to thee.

Du Bois. In short, 'tis one of your friends, and that's sufficient. He told me that 'tis at your peril not to go hence, and that fortune threatens you here with being arrested.

Alcestes. But how? Would he not specify anything t'ye?

Du Bois. No, he asked me for a pen, ink, and paper; and wrote a word or two, by which, I believe, you may come at the knowledge of the bottom of this mystery.

Alcestes. Give it me then.

Célimène. What can there be in this?

Alcestes. I don't know, but I long to be fully let into it. Wilt thou ha' done quickly, thou impudent villain?

Du Bois (*after having fumbled for it a long while*). Troth, sir, I left it upon your table.

Alcestes. I don't know what hinders me—

Gélimène. Don't put yourself in a passion, but go and unravel this perplexing business.

Alcestes. It seems to me that fortune, take what care I can, has sworn to debar me of your conversation; but to triumph over it, indulge my passion, madam, with one sight of you more before the day is ended.

ACT V

SCENE I

Alcestes. My resolution is fixed, I tell you.

Philinte. But, whatever this stroke may be, must it needs oblige you—

Alcestes. No, you labour in vain, in vain do you reason with me, nothing can divert me from what I say. Too much perverseness reigns in the age we live in, and I'm resolved to withdraw myself from all human commerce. What! the world sees that honour, probity, modesty, and the laws are all at once against my adversary! People are everywhere crying up the justice of my cause! My mind reposes itself upon the assurance of my right! At the same time I am deceived in the success; I have justice on my side, yet I lose my cause! A scoundrel, whose

scandalous history is so well known, comes off triumphant by a most hellish falsehood! All honesty yields to his perfidy! He finds a way of justifying himself in cutting my throat! The importance of his grimace, wherein is glaring artifice, overthrows all right and perverts justice! He gets a decree of court to crown his villainy; and still not content with the injury they do me, there is got abroad in the world an abominable book, of which even the reading is criminal, a book that deserves the utmost severity, of which the knave has the impudence to make me the author! And upon this Oronites is observed to mutter, and villainously endeavours to support the imposture! He who maintains the rank of an honest man at court, to whom I have nothing but been sincere and frank; who comes to me in spite of me, with an eager forwardness, to demand my opinion of some verses he has made, and because I treat him with honour, and would neither betray him, nor the truth, he is aiding to oppress me with an imaginary crime! Now is he become my greatest adversary! And I am never heartily to be pardoned, because I did not think his song was a good one! S'death, 'tis after this manner mankind are made! These are the actions to which a sense of glory carries 'em! This is the fidelity, the virtuous zeal, the justice and the honour one finds among 'em. Let's away, 'tis too much to bear the plagues they are devising; let us escape from these savage woods, this cutthroat place; and since among men you live like real wolves, traitors, you shall never have me with you again as long as I live.

Philintes. I apprehend the design you are in to be a good deal too hasty, and the whole mischief is not so great as you make it. What your antagonist has the assurance to impute to you has not had the credit to occasion your being arrested; his false report we see destroys itself, and 'tis an action which may possibly turn severely upon himself.

Alcestes. Him! He fears not any clamour from such tricks as these, he has a licence to be an avowed villain; and so far will such an adventure as this be from hurting his credit, you'll see him to-morrow in a more flourishing condition.

Philintes. In short, 'tis certain people have not given in too much to the report his malice has spread against you; from this quarter hitherto you have nothing to fear; and as for your lawsuit, which you may complain about, 'tis easy for you to bring the trial on afresh, and against this sentence—

Alcestes. No, I'll abide by it. However sensible an injury such a sentence may do me, I'll take great care they shall not reverse it; one sees too plainly by this how right is abused; and I would have it remain to

posterity as a notorious mark, a famous testimony of the wickedness of the men of this age. It may indeed cost me about twenty thousand livres, but for twenty thousand livres I shall have a right to rave against the iniquity of human nature, and to nourish an immortal hatred for it.

Philintes. But in short—

Alcestes. But in short your pains are superfluous. What can you say to me, sir, upon this head? Can you possibly have the assurance to excuse to my face the horribleness of all that's transacting?

Philintes. No, I do agree to what you please. Everything goes by cabal, and by pure interest; and 'tis nowadays scarce anything else but craft that carries it, and men should be otherways disposed. But is their want of justice a reason why we should think of withdrawing from their society? All these human defects give us opportunities in life of exercising our philosophy. 'Tis the most amiable employment virtue finds; and if every place were full of honesty, and all hearts were frank, just, and docile, the greatest part of our virtues would be useless to us, since the use of 'em is placed in this, in the power of bearing the injustice of another, in respect to our property, without being ruffled. And after the same way that a heart of profound virtue—

Alcestes. I know, sir, that you talk the best in the world. You always abound in fine reasoning, but you lose your time and all your fine discourses. Reason persuades me for my good to retire; I have not command enough of my tongue, I could not answer for what I might say, and I should run myself into a thousand broils. Let me, without any more words, wait upon Célimène, 'tis proper I have her consent to my design; I shall now see whether she really loves me, and this is the critical moment to convince me of it.

Philintes. Let us go up to Éliante, and wait her coming.

Alcestes. No, my mind is agitated with too much care; go you and see her, and leave me, in short, in this little dusky corner with my gloomy melancholy.

Philintes. That's odd sort o' company to wait for, I'll go prevail upon Éliante to come down.

SCENE II

Orontes. Yes, madam, you are to consider whether by so dear an engagement you will fix me forever yours. I must have an absolute certainty of your affections; a lover does not like wavering in such a

point as this. If the warmth of my passion has really moved you, you should not by any means scruple letting me see it; and after all, the proof I demand of you is no more than not to admit of Alcestes' addresses, to sacrifice him, madam, to my love, and in short, from this time forward to banish him your house.

Célimène. But what mighty matter provokes you against him. You whom I have heard speak so much of his merit?

Orontes. There's no need, madam, of these explanations. The matter in hand is to know your sentiments: pray, choose to keep one or t'other, my resolution only waits upon yours.

Alcestes (*stepping out of the corner whither he had retired*). Yes, the gentleman is right: you must choose, madam, and his demand here agrees with my desire; the same impatience urges me, and the same care calls me, my love must have an infallible mark of yours. Matters can be protracted no longer, this is the moment you are to explain yourself.

Orontes. I would not by any means, sir, disturb your good fortune by an importunate passion.

Alcestes. Jealous, or not jealous, sir, I'll have no share of her heart with you.

Orontes. If she thinks your love preferable to mine—

Alcestes. If she is capable of the least inclination for you—

Orontes. I swear henceforward to make no pretensions to her.

Alcestes. I peremptorily swear never to set eyes on her more.

Orontes. Madam, you may speak without constraint.

Alcestes. Madam, you may explain yourself without fear.

Orontes. You have nothing to do but tell us where your inclinations are fixed.

Alcestes. You have nothing but to cut the matter short, and choose which of us you will.

Orontes. What? do you seem to have any difficulty in such a choice?

Alcestes. What? do you hesitate, and appear uncertain?

Célimène. Good heavens! how unseasonable is this importunity! and how you show yourselves both in the wrong! I can easily determine as to the preference, and 'tis not my heart here that wavers: 'tis not in suspense betwixt you, nor is anything sooner done than to choose what we wish. But to say the truth, I am not a little upon the rack to make a declaration of this kind before you. I think these disobliging speeches should never be spoken in the presence of people. That a heart gives light sufficient in its inclinations, without our being

obliged to proceed abruptly to a quarrel; and that 'tis sufficient, in short, that proofs of a milder nature inform a lover of the ill success of his courtship.

Orontes. No, no, I have nothing to fear from a frank confession, I consent to it on my side.

Alcestes. And I demand it; 'tis that I have here the boldness, above all, to insist on and I don't want to see any of your management. Your great study is to keep in with all the world, but no more amusement, no more uncertainty; you must explain yourself clearly upon this affair, otherways I shall take your refusal for a decision. I shall know, for my part, how to interpret this silence, and shall reckon upon the worst I can think to be really said.

Orontes. I am obliged to you, sir, for this warmth, and I here say the same thing to her that you do.

Célimène. How you tease me here with this obstinacy! Is there any reason in what you demand? And have I not told you what motive restrains me? I'll be judged by Éliante who comes here.

SCENE III

Célimène. Here am I persecuted, cousin, by people whose humour seems to me to be concerted. They both of 'em, with the same heat, will needs have me declare which of 'em my heart makes choice of; and that by a sentence which I must pronounce to his face, I should forbid one of the two all the application he can make. Tell me whether this is ever done?

Eliante. Don't consult me upon the subject: you may perhaps address yourself to a very wrong person. I am for the people who speak their thoughts.

Orontes. 'Tis in vain, madam, for you to excuse yourself.

Alcestes. All your evasions will be but ill-seconded.

Orontes. You must, you must speak, and have done wavering.

Alcestes. You need do no more than continue silent.

Orontes. I desire but one word to end our debates.

Alcestes. And I, for my share, understand you, if you don't speak at all.

SCENE IV

Acastes. Madam, we two come, no offence, to clear up a certain trifling affair.

Clitander (*to ORONTES and ALCESTES*). You are here very apropos, gentlemen, and you are also concerned in this affair.

Arsinoé (*to CÉLIMÈNE*). Madam, you will be surprised at sight of me, but these gentlemen are the occasion of my coming. They came to me, and complained of a trick which it can't enter into my heart to give credit to. I have too high an esteem for the native honesty of your mind ever to believe you capable of such a crime; my eyes contradicted their strongest proofs, and my friendship passing by some trifling words we had, I was willing to bear 'em company to your house, to see you clear yourself of this calumny.

Acastes. Yes, madam, let us see, with calmness of spirit, how you will go about to support this; was this letter written by you to Clitander?

Clitander. Did you write this tender epistle to Acastes?

Acastes (*to ORONTES and ALCESTES*). Gentlemen, these lines have nothing in them obscure to you. I doubt not but her civility has made you too well acquainted with her hand. But this is well enough worth the trouble of reading.

You are a strange man, Clitander, to condemn my gaiety, and to reproach me, that I am never so merry, as when I am not with you. There is nothing so unjust; and if you don't come very soon, to ask my pardon for this offence, I'll never pardon it as long as I live. Our clumsy Flemish viscount—

He should have been here.

Our clumsy Flemish viscount, with whom you begin your complaints, is a man who can never hit my taste; and since the time I saw him spitting in a pool for full three quarters of an hour, to make circles, I never could have a good opinion of him. As to the little marquis—

That's myself, gentlemen, without vanity.

As to the little marquis who held me so long by the hand yesterday, I think there is nothing so diminutive as his whole person; and 'tis one of your gentry of merit, who have nothing but their sword to trust to. As to the man with green ribbons—

Your turn now, sir.

As to the man with green ribbons, he diverts me sometimes with his blunt ways, and his fantastical peevishness. But there are a thousand occasions when I think him the most troublesome creature in the world. And for the sonnet-monger—

Now for your packet. (*To ORONTES.*)

And for the sonnet-monger who pushes himself forward for a wit, and will be an author in spite of the world, I cannot take the pains to hearken to what he says; and his prose fatigues me as much as his verse. Persuade yourself, therefore, that I am not always diverted so well as you imagine; that I find more matter of complaint than I could wish in all the parties I am drawn into; and that the presence of those we love gives a marvellous relish to the pleasures we enjoy.

Clitander. Now for myself.

Your Clitander, whom you talk to me of, and who is so much of the affected beau, is the last man I should have a kindness for. He is extravagant in persuading himself one loves him; and you are so in believing one does not love you. To be reasonable therefore, change sentiments with him; and see me as often as you can, to help me bear the trouble of being besieged by him.

We have here the model of a very fine character, madam, and you know what to call it. 'Tis enough, we shall both of us go show this glorious portrait of your heart in all places.

Acastes. I could say a good deal to you, and a fine subject it is; but I don't hold you worthy my anger; and I could let you see, that your little marquises, for their consolation, have hearts of a much higher price.

SCENE V

Orontes. What! am I thus pulled to pieces after all the things you have written me? And does your heart, adorned with the fair appearances of love, engage itself by turns to all mankind? Go, I was too much a dupe, and shall be so no longer, you do me a favour in letting me know you; I am the richer by a heart which you thus restore to me, and have my revenge in what you lose. (*To ALCESTES.*) Sir, I don't know any obstacle there is now to your passion, and you may conclude matters with the lady.

SCENE VI

Arsinoé (to CÉLIMÈNE). This is certainly one of the basest actions in the world, I can be no longer silent, I'm shocked at it. Were there ever any proceedings like yours, madam? I don't enter into the concerns

of the rest. (*Pointing to ALCESTES.*) But this gentleman, who had fixed your happiness, a man of merit and honour as he is, and who dotes on you to idolatry, should he—

Alceste. Pray, madam, leave me to manage my own interests in this affair myself, and don't charge yourself with these superfluous cares. In vain does my heart observe you espouse its quarrel, 'tis not in a condition to requite you for this great zeal; and you are not the person I could think of, should I strive to revenge myself by another choice.

Arsinoé. Umph! Do you fancy, sir, I have any such thought, and that I should be in such a violent hurry to have you? You have a great deal of vanity, I think, in your temper, if you can flatter yourself with such a belief. That lady's refuse is a sort of ware one would be much to blame to be taken with. Pray be undeceived, and carry it less haughtily, people of my condition are not for such as you. You will do well to sigh for her still, and I long to see such a fine match.

SCENE VII

Alceste (*to CÉLIMÈNE*). Well, in spite of all I see, I have hitherto been silent, and have let all the world speak before me. Have I commanded myself long enough? and may I now—

Célimène. Yes, you may say everything. You are in the right when you complain, and reproach me after any manner you please. I'm to blame. I confess it, and my confused mind does not seek to put you off with any frivolous excuse. I despised the fury of the rest here, but I own my crime in respect to you; certainly your resentment is just. I know how criminal I must appear to you, that everything speaks my unfaithfulness to you, and that in short you have reason to hate me. Do so, I consent to it.

Alceste. But can I do it, traitress, can I thus get the better of all my fondness? And though I should most ardently wish to hate you, shall I find a heart ready to obey me? (*To ÉLIANTE and PHILINTES.*) You see what an unworthy fondness can do, and I make you both witnesses of my weakness. But to confess the truth to you, this is not all yet, you will see me push this matter even to extremity, show you that we are wrongfully styled wise, and that in all hearts there is still something of the man. (*To CÉLIMÈNE.*) Yes, perfidious creature, I am willing to forget your crimes, and can find in my heart to excuse all your tricks, and cover 'em with the name of a weakness,

into which the viciousness of the times has betrayed your youth; provided your heart will second a design I have formed of avoiding all human creatures, and that you are determined to follow me without delay into my desert, where I have made a vow to live. This is the only way you can in every one's opinion repair the mischief of your letters, and by which, after this discovery, which a noble mind must abhor, I may be allowed still to love you.

Célimène. I renounce the world before I grow old, and go bury myself in your desert!

Alceste. And if your flame is answerable to mine, what should all the rest of the world signify to you? Are not your desires satisfied with me?

Célimène. Solitude is frightful to a person of twenty; I don't perceive my soul great or firm enough to resolve upon undertaking a design of that nature. If giving you my hand can satisfy your wishes, I may resolve to tie the knot, and Hymen—

Alceste. No, now my heart detests you, and this refusal alone does more than all the rest. Since you are not so far linked in the charming bondage to find your all in me as I do in you, go, I discard you, and this sensible affront for ever disengages me from your base tyranny.

SCENE VIII

Alceste (*speaks to ÉLIANTE*). A thousand virtues, madam, adorn your beauty, and I never saw anything in you but what was sincere. I have had for this long time an extreme value for you; but allow me ever to esteem you in the same way. And excuse my heart in the variety of its troubles, if it waives the honour of wearing your chains; I am sensible that I am unworthy of them, and begin to find Heaven has not formed me for this union; that the refuse of a heart which could be of no worth to you would be too mean an homage for you, and that in short—

Éliante. You may pursue your thought, my hand is under no embarrassment where to bestow itself. And here is your friend, who without giving myself too much uneasiness, might possibly accept it, should I desire it of him.

Philinte. Ah, madam! that honour is my whole ambition, and I could sacrifice my blood and life for it.

Alceste. That you may taste true contentment, may you ever retain these sentiments each for the other. Betrayed on all sides, oppressed with

injustice, I am going to escape a gulf where vice reigns triumphant; and to search out some retired corner of the world, where one may have the liberty to be a man of honour.

Philinte.

Come, come, my charmer, let's exhaust our art,
To break this savage purpose of his heart.

Translated by H. Baker and J. Miller.

The Doctor in Spite of Himself

CAST OF CHARACTERS

GÉRONTE, *father to Lucinda.*
LUCINDA, *daughter to Géronte.*
LEANDER, *Lucinda's lover.*
SGANAREL, *husband to Martina,
a domestic of Géronte.*
MARTINA, *wife of Sganarel.*
MR. ROBERT, *neighbour to Sganarel.*
VALERE, *domestic to Géronte.*
LUCAS, *husband to Jacqueline.*
JACQUELINE, *nurse at Géronte's,
and wife to Lucas.*
THIBAUT, *father to Perrin.* } *peasants.*
PERRIN, *son of Thibaut.*

SCENE: *The Country.*

ACT I

SCENE I

Sganarel. No, I tell thee that I will not do't, and that it belongs to me to talk, and to be master.

Martina. And I tell thee that I'll have thee to live as I please, and that I'm not married to thee to endure thy frolics.

Sganarel. O the monstrous plague of having a wife! How right was Aristotle when he declared that a wife is worse than a devil!

Martina. Observe a little the notable man, with his blockhead of an Aristotle.

Sganarel. Yes, notable man. Find me a faggot-binder, who understands, like me, to reason upon things, who has served for six years a famous physician; and who in his younger days had his accidence by heart.

Martina. Plague on thee for an eternal ass.

Sganarel. Plague on thee for an impudent baggage.

Martina. Cursed be that day and hour wherein I took it into my head to say Yes!

Sganarel. Cursed be the hornified notary who made me sign to my ruin!

Martina. It well becomes you, truly, to complain of that affair. Oughtest thou to be one single moment without thanking Heaven that thou hast me for thy wife? Or didst thou merit such a person as I am?

Sganarel. 'Tis true that you did me too much honour, and I had room to be satisfied the first night of our nuptials. Hey-s'death, don't make me speak upon that head; I should say certain things-

Martina. What? what would you say?

Sganarel. Enough; let us leave this chapter, it sufficeth that we know what we know, and that you were very lucky in lighting on me.

Martina. Lucky d'ye call me in lighting on thee? A fellow who has brought me to a hospital, a sot, a rascal who eats up all that I have.

Sganarel. You lie, I drink part of it.

Martina. Who sells, piece by piece, everything that's in the house.

Sganarel. That's living upon one's means.

Martina. Who has taken my very bed from under me.

Sganarel. You'll rise the earlier.

Martina. Who, in short, has not left a single movable in all the house.

Sganarel. We may move the easier.

Martina. And who from morning to night does nothing but play and drink.

Sganarel. That's to keep myself from the vapours.

Martina. And what would you have me do the while with my family?

Sganarel. Whatever you please.

Martina. I have four poor little infants in arms.

Sganarel. Lay 'em on the ground.

Martina. Who are crying to me every moment for bread.

Sganarel. Give them the rod. When I have drunk well, and eaten well, I'll have every one satisfied in my house.

Martina. And do you mean, Sot, that things shall always go so?

Sganarel. Wife, let us proceed softly, if you please.

Martina. That I shall perpetually endure your insolences and debaucheries.

Sganarel. Don't let us put ourselves in a passion, Wife.

Martina. And that I shall never be able to find a way of bringing you to your duty.

Sganarel. You know, Wife, that I have not a very passive spirit of my own, and that I have an arm sufficiently strong.

Martina. I laugh at your threats.

Sganarel. My pretty little wife, my honey, your hide itches according to custom.

Martina. I'll let you see that I'm no ways afraid of you.

Sganarel. My dear rib, you have a desire to force something from me.

Martina. D'ye think that I fear your words?

Sganarel. Sweet object of my vows, I shall cuff your ears.

Martina. Sot, as thou art!

Sganarel. I shall bang you.

Martina. Wine-sack!

Sganarel. I shall belabour you.

Martina. Scoundrel!

Sganarel. I shall curry you.

Martina. Rascal, impudence, knave, coward, villain, hang-dog, mumper, rogue, pickpocket, varlet, thief—

Sganarel. Um—you will have it then? (*SGANAREL taking a cudgel and beating her.*)

Martina (crying). Oh! oh! oh! oh!

Sganarel. This is the true method to make you quiet.

SCENE II

Mr. Robert. Hoity, hoity, hoity; fie, what's here to do? What a base trick is this! Plague on the scoundrel for beating his wife thus.

Martina (*to MR. ROBERT*). I have a mind that he should beat me.

Mr. Robert. Nay then I agree to it with all my heart.

Martina. What do you meddle for?

Mr. Robert. I was in the wrong.

Martina. Is it your business?

Mr. Robert. You say right.

Martina. Observe this impertinent mortal a little, who would hinder husbands from beating their wives!

Mr. Robert. I recant.

Martina. What have you to do to pry into it?

Mr. Robert. Nothing.

Martina. Does it belong to you to run your nose into it?

Mr. Robert. No.

Martina. Concern yourself with your own business.

Mr. Robert. I say no more.

Martina. I have a mind to be beaten.

Mr. Robert. Agreed.

Martina. 'Tisn't at your expense.

Mr. Robert. True.

Martina. And you are a sot to come thrusting in your oar where you have nothing to do. (*Gives him a blow.*)

Mr. Robert (*to SGANAREL*). Neighbour, I ask your pardon with all my heart. Go on, thrash, bang your wife as you should; I'll help you if you will.

Sganarel. I have not a mind to't.

Mr. Robert. Nay, that's another thing.

Sganarel. I will beat her if I will; and if I won't, I won't beat her.

Mr. Robert. Mighty well.

Sganarel. 'Tis my wife, and not yours.

Mr. Robert. Undoubtedly.

Sganarel. You have no business to command me.

Mr. Robert. Right.

Sganarel. I have nothing to do with your help.

Mr. Robert. With all my heart.

Sganarel. And you are an impertinent fellow to intrude into other peo-

ple's affairs. Learn what Cicero says, That between the tree and the finger you must not thrust in the bark. (*Beats MR. ROBERT, and drives him off.*)

SCENE III

Sganarel. So, come, let us be at peace with one another. Here, shake hands.

Martina. Yes, after you have beat me in this manner?

Sganarel. That's nothing. Shake hands.

Martina. I won't.

Sganarel. Hey!

Martina. No.

Sganarel. Sweet wife.

Martina. No.

Sganarel. Come, I tell thee.

Martina. I won't do't.

Sganarel. Come, come, come.

Martina. No, I'll be in a passion.

Sganarel. Fie, 'tis a trifle. Come, come.

Martina. Let me alone.

Sganarel. Shake hands, I say.

Martina. You have used me too ill.

Sganarel. Well, go, I ask your pardon, let's see thy hand.

Martina. I forgive thee. (*Aside.*) But thou shalt pay for't.

Sganarel. You are a fool to regard that; these are trifling things, which are often necessary in friendship, and five or six strokes of a cudgel amongst people who love one another only serve to whet the affection. Go, I'll be gone to the wood, and I promise thee above a hundred faggots to-day.

SCENE IV

Martina (alone). Get thee gone, whatever face I put on't, I shall not forget my resentment, and I'm all on fire to find means of punishing thee for the blows thou hast given me. I know well enough that a woman has always about her wherewith to be revenged of a husband. But that's too delicate a punishment for my hang-dog. I want a revenge that he would feel a little better; for this is not sufficient for the injury I've received.

SCENE V

Lucas (to VALERE, not seeing MARTINA). I'facks we have taken the deuce of a commission on us, and I don't know, for my part, what we think we could think of getting by't.

Valere (to LUCAS, not seeing MARTINA). What wouldst thou have, my honest man-nurse? We must obey our master; besides, we have both of us an interest in the health of our mistress his daughter, for her marriage, which is delayed by her disease, would without doubt bring us in a reward. Horatio, who is a generous man, has the best pretension to her person; and though she has discovered a kindness for one Leander, you know well enough that her father would never consent to receive him for his son-in-law.

Martina (musing aside, thinking she's alone). Can't I find out some device to revenge myself?

Lucas (to VALERE). But what an a whim is this that's gotten into his head, since the doctors have all lost their Latin in the affair?

Valere (to LUCAS). One sometimes finds by dint of searching what could not be found at first; and very often in simple places—

Martina. Yes, I must be revenged at any rate whatever; these strokes of the cudgel rise in my stomach, I can't digest them, and— (*Running against VALERE and LUCAS.*) Oh! Gentlemen, I ask your pardon, I did not see you, for I was puzzling my brains for something that perplexes me.

Valere. Every one has their cares in this world. And we are likewise looking for what we gladly would find.

Martina. May it be anything that I can assist you in?

Valere. Perhaps it may: we want to meet with some able man, some particular doctor, who might give some relief to our master's daughter, that's seized with a distemper which has quite and clean taken away the use of her tongue. A great many physicians have already spent all their art upon her; but one sometimes finds folks with wonderful secrets, certain peculiar remedies, which very often do what the others could not do, and 'tis this we are looking for.

Martina (aside). Ha! My stars have inspired me with an admirable invention to revenge myself on my rascal! (*To them.*) You could never have applied yourselves better to meet with what you want, for we have a man, the most marvellous man in all the world, for desperate distempers.

Valere. How! Pray where can we find him.

Martina. You'll find him this moment towards that little place there, he diverts himself with cutting of wood.

Lucas. A doctor cut wood!

Valere. He diverts himself with gathering of simples you'd say?

Martina. No. 'Tis an odd kind of a man who takes delight in it, a fantastical, fanciful, humoursome mortal, and one that you'd never take for what he is; he goes dressed in an extravagant manner, affects sometimes to appear ignorant, keeping his knowledge within him, and avoids nothing so much as exercising the marvellous talents which Heaven has given him for medicine.

Valere. 'Tis a wonderful thing that all your great men have still something of caprice, some small grain of folly mixed with their learning.

Martina. The folly of this man is greater than can be believed, for it sometimes goes so far that he'll bear to be beat before he'll acknowledge his capacity; and I give you notice that you'll never gain your end, that he'll never own he's a doctor, if the whim is on him, unless you each take a cudgel and bring him by strength of blows to confess at last what at first he'll conceal from you. 'Tis thus we treat him when we have occasion for him.

Valere. Strange folly!

Martina. 'Tis true. But after that you'll see he'll do miracles.

Valere. What's his name?

Martina. His name is Sganarel; but he is easy to be known. 'Tis a man who has a large black beard, and who wears a ruff, with a yellow and green coat.

Lucas. A yellow and green coat! He's the doctor of paroquets then.

Valere. But is it very true that he is so learned as you say?

Martina. What? Why 'tis a man that does wonders. Six months ago a woman was given over by all the other physicians. They thought her dead for six hours, and prepared to bury her, when they brought the man we are speaking of, by force. Having seen her, he put a little drop of something into her mouth; and that very instant, she raised herself from her bed, and began immediately to walk about the room, as if nothing had been the matter.

Lucas. Hah!

Valere. This must have been some drop of drinkable gold.

Martina. That might really be. 'Tis not three weeks ago that a young lad of twelve years old tumbled down from the top of a tower, and broke his head, arms, and legs, on the pavement. They had no sooner

got our man to him but he rubbed his body all over with a certain ointment, which he makes, and the youth immediately raised himself on his feet, and ran to play at chuck.

Lucas. Hah!

Valere. This same man must have the universal medicine.

Martina. Who doubts of it?

Lucas. Ods bobs, this is just such a man as we want; let's go quickly and search 'en out.

Valere. We thank you for the favour you've done us.

Martina. But remember well, however, the caution I have given you.

Lucas. Hey! 'Zooks, let us alone. If he wants nothing but beating, the cow's our own.

Valere (To LUCAS). We were mighty happy in meeting with this woman; I conceive the greatest hopes from it in the world.

SCENE VI

Sganarel (comes on the stage, with a bottle in his hand, not seeing VALERE or LUCAS). Tol de rol, lol dol dol.

Valere. I hear somebody singing and cutting of wood.

Sganarel. Tol, lol, dol—I'faith, I've worked enough to drink a sup. Let's take a little breath. (*He drinks.*) This same wood is as salt as the devil.

(*Sings.*) What pleasure's so great, as the bottle can give,
What music so sweet, as thy little gull, gull!
My fate might be envied by all men that live,
Were my dear jolly bottle but constantly full.
Say why, my sweet bottle, I prithee, say why,
Since, when full so delightful, you'll ever be dry.

Come, s'death, we must not breed melancholy.

Valere (low to LUCAS). There's the very man.

Lucas (low to VALERE). I think you say true, and that I se have found 'en out by my nose.

Valere. Let's see him nearer.

Sganarel (hugging his bottle). Ah! my little rogue, how I do love thee, my little corksyl! (*Seeing VALERE and LUCAS looking at him, he lowers his voice.*) My fate—might—be envied—by all men that live—What the deuce, who do these folks want?

Valere. 'Tis he, most certainly.

Lucas (to VALERE). He's as like him that was defigured to us as if a had been spitten out of his mouth.

SGANAREL sets down the bottle on the ground, and VALERE bowing to salute him, he thinking 'tis with a design to take it away, puts it on the other side. Upon which LUCAS doing the same thing, he takes it up again, and holds it close to his breast, with divers gestures, which make great dumb show.

Sganarel (aside). They consult together, and look earnestly at me. What design can they have?

Valere. Sir, is it not you who are called Sganarel?

Sganarel. Hey! What?

Valere. I ask you if it is not you whose name is Sganarel?

Sganarel (turning towards VALERE, and then towards LUCAS). Yes, and no, according to what you would have with him.

Valere. Nothing, but to do him all the civilities we could.

Sganarel. In that case, 'tis me whose name's Sganarel.

Valere. Sir, we are transported to see you; we have been recommended to you for that we are searching after; and we come to beg your assistance, which we want.

Sganarel. If 'tis anything, gentlemen, that depends upon my little employment, I am very ready to serve you.

Valere. Sir, 'tis too great a favour that you do us: but be covered, pray, Sir, the sun may incommod you.

Lucas. Cover your skull, zir.

Sganarel (aside). These people are mighty full of ceremony. (*Puts on his hat.*)

Valere. Sir, you must not think strange that we come to you. Skilful people are always sought for, and we are informed of your ability.

Sganarel. 'Tis true, Sirs, that I am the first man in the world for making of faggots.

Valere. Ah! Sir—

Sganarel. I spare nothing in doing 'em, and make 'em after a manner that people have no reason to find fault with them.

Valere. Sir, that's not the thing in question.

Sganarel. But then I fell 'em for nine and twopence a hundred.

Valere. Pray don't let us talk of that.

Sganarel. I assure you I can't let them go for less.

Valere. Sir, we know how things are.

Sganarel. If you know how things are, you know that I sell them so.

Valere. Sir, this is jesting, but—

Sganarel. I do not jest, I can't bate anything of it.

Valere. Let us talk after another manner, pray now.

Sganarel. You may get them at another place for less, there are faggots and faggots: but for those that I make—

Valere. Pray, Sir, let us leave this discourse.

Sganarel. I swear to you that you shall not have them, if you fall short a farthing of it.

Valere. Oh! fie.

Sganarel. No, o' my conscience, you shall pay that for 'em. I speak sincerely, and am not a man that would ask too much.

Valere. Should such a person as you, Sir, amuse himself with these gross dissimulations, demean himself by talking in this manner; a man so learned, such a famous physician as you are, be willing to disguise himself from the eyes of the world, and keep buried the fine talents he enjoys?

Sganarel (aside). The fellow's a fool.

Valere. Pray, Sir, don't dissemble with us.

Sganarel. What?

Lucas. All this hodge-podge signifies nought; I do know what I do know.

Sganarel. Well then, what would you say? Who do you take me for?

Valere. For what you are, for a great doctor.

Sganarel. Doctor yourself; I am not one, nor ever was.

Valere (aside). This is the folly that possesses him. (*Aloud.*) Sir, don't be willing to deny things any longer; and let us not come, pray, to troublesome extremities.

Sganarel. To what?

Valere. To certain things which we should be sorry for.

Sganarel. S'death, come to what you please; I am not a doctor, and don't understand what you would be at.

Valere (aside). I see plainly that we must make use of the remedy. (*Aloud.*) Sir, once more I desire you to own what you are.

Lucas. And s'bobs, don't latterlammes it any longer, but confess frankly that you be a doctor.

Sganarel (aside). I'm mad—

Valere. Where's the good of denying what is known?

Lucas. Wherefore all these whimsies? What service will this do you.

Sganarel. Gentlemen in one word, as well as in two thousand, I tell you that I am not a doctor.

Valere. You are not a doctor?

Sganarel. No.

Lucas. Y'an't a doctor?

Sganarel. No, I tell you.

Valere. Since you will have it, we must betake ourselves to it then. (*They take each of them a cudgel and thrash him.*)

Sganarel. Hold, hold, hold, Gentlemen, I'm what you please.

Valere. Why, Sir, did you oblige us to this violence?

Lucas. To what good did you make us be at the pain to beat you?

Valere. I assure you that I did it with all the regret in the world.

Lucas. By my foith and vronkly, I did it with zorrow.

Sganarel. What the deuce d'e mean, Sirs? Pray, is it out of a joke, or are you both distracted, that you will have me to be a doctor?

Valere. What, won't you yield yet, and do you deny that you are a physician?

Sganarel. The devil take me if I am one.

Lucas. En't it true that you do understand physic.

Sganarel. No, plague choke me if I do. (*They begin to beat him again.*)

Hold, hold; well Gentlemen, yes, since you will have it so, I am a doctor, I am a doctor; an apothecary too, if you think good. I rather choose to agree to everything than suffer myself to be knocked o' the head.

Valere. Ay, now things go well, Sir; I'm transported to see you're become reasonable.

Lucas. You give me a heart full of joy to zee you talk in this monner.

Valere. I ask your pardon with all my soul.

Lucas. I'se demand excuse for the liberty Ic' have ta'en.

Sganarel (aside). Whu, have I really deceived myself then, and am I become a doctor without knowing it?

Valere. You shall not repent, Sir, discovering to us what you are; and you'll certainly see that you'll be satisfied for it.

Sganarel. But, Gentlemen, tell me, don't you deceive yourselves? Is it very sure that I am a doctor?

Lucas. Yes, by my foith.

Sganarel. In good earnest?

Valere. Undoubtedly.

Sganarel. The devil take me if I knew it.

Valere. How! You are the most able physician in the world.

Sganarel. Ay! Ay!

Lucas. A doctor that has healed I know not how many ailments.

Sganarel. O dear!

Valere. A woman was taken for dead six hours, she was just ready to be buried, when with one drop of a certain thing you brought her to life again, and made her walk immediately about the room.

Sganarel. The plague I did!

Lucas. A little lad of a dozen-year old fell from the top of a steeple, whereupon a had his head, lags, and arms broaken; and you, with I know not what ointment, made 'en soon scramble up on his feet, and scour away to play at chuck.

Sganarel. The devil!

Valere. In short, Sir, you shall have satisfaction with us; and you may gain whatever you will if you'll but suffer us to conduct you to where we want you.

Sganarel. I may gain what I will?

Valere. Yes.

Sganarel. Oh! I'm a doctor without dispute. I had forgotten it, but I remember it now. What's the affair? Where must I transport myself to?

Valere. We'll conduct you. The affair is to go see a young lady who has lost her speech.

Sganarel. Faith I have not found it.

Valere (*to LUCAS*). He loves to joke. (*To SGANAREL.*) Come, Sir.

Sganarel. Without a doctor's gown?

Valere. We'll procure you one.

Sganarel (*offering his bottle to VALERE*). Do you hold that. That's where I put my julep. (*Then turns towards LUCAS and spits.*) Walk you over that by prescription of the doctor.

Lucas. By the mass this is a doctor that pleases me; I believe that he'll succeed, he's such a merry fellow.

ACT II

SCENE I

Valere. Yes, Sir, I believe you will be satisfied; for we have brought you the greatest physician in the world.

Lucas. Adzsooks, none can be better; all the others be not worthy to clean his shoes for'n.

Valere. 'Tis one who has done marvellous cures.

Lucas. Who has healed folk that were dead.

Valere. He's a little whimsical as I told you; and i'faith there are times when his senses give him the slip, and he does not appear to be what he is.

Lucas. Yes, a loves to play the wag, and foith they do say, no offence, that a have had a small knock o' the crown with an axe.

Valere. But he's all skill at the bottom; and he often says things extremely sublime.

Lucas. When a gives his mind to't, a talks as vine exactly as tho'f a read in a book.

Valere. His reputation is already spread round here; and all the world come to him.

Géronte. I've a vast desire to see him; bring him to me immediately.

Valere. I'll go look for him.

SCENE II

Jacqueline. By my trath, zir, this will do just what the others ha' done.

I'se believe that he'll be so good so bad; and the best physician you can gee your daughter, according to my notion, is a good hondsome husband for whom she has a kindness.

Géronte. Good lack, my sweet nurse, you meddle with many things.

Lucas. Hold your peace, our huswife Jacqueline; it don't belong to you to thrust in your nose there.

Jacqueline. I tell you, and both o' ye, that all these physicians will do her no more good than a glass of fair water; that your daughter has need o' somewhat else than rhubarb and zenna; and that a husband's a plaster which cures all the ailments of young women.

Géronte. Is she in a condition now that any one would burthen himself with her with the infirmity she has? And when I had a design of marrying her, did she not oppose my intentions?

Jacqueline. I believe so truly, you would a' given her a mon she doan't like. Wherefore did not you not offer her this same Mr. Liander, who has gotten her heart? She'd been mighty obedient, and I'll wager that he'll take her as she is, if yow'd but give her to him.

Géronte. This Leander is not the man she must have; he has not the wealth which the other has.

Jacqueline. He has an nuncle that's mortal rich, whose heritage a is to be.

Géronte. All these riches to come appear to me as mere songs. There's nothing like what people are in possession of; and we run a great risk of being cozened when we reckon up riches which are kept for us by others. Death has not always open ears to the wishes and prayers of your gentlemen inheritors, and they have time to be sharp set who wait for somebody's decease before they can eat.

Jacqueline. In short, I've often heard say that in marriage, as in other affairs, contentment is beyond riches. Vathers and mothers ha' the cursed custom of asking alway what han he, and what han she? And Gaffer Piarre has married his girl Simounetta to fat Tummas, because a had a scrap of a vineyard more than young Robin, where she had placed her liking; and there the poor creature is gone as yallow as a quince, and has gotten nothing all the whoile. This is a foin example for you, zir; folk have nothing but their pleasure in this world; and I should rather choose to gee my girl a good husband, that was agreeable to her, than all the incomes o' the country.

Géronte. Plague! Mrs. Nurse, how you prate! Hold your peace pray; you take too much trouble on you, and will overheat your milk.

Lucas (*striking GÉRONTE on the shoulders at the end of every sentence*). S'bobs, hold your tongue, you are an impar dinton huswife. Maister ha' nothing to do with thy preachments; he knows what a mun do. Mind to gee your child the breast, without being so much upon the reasonous. Maister is his daughter's vather, and he's a good mon, and a woise one, and knows what to do in the case.

Géronte. Oh! Softly, softly.

Lucas (*striking GÉRONTE on the shoulders again*). Sir, I'll mortify her a bit, and learn her the respect she awes you.

Géronte. Yes, but these actions are not necessary.

SCENE III

Valere. Sir, prepare yourself, this is your doctor that's coming in.

Géronte (*to SGANAREL*). Sir, I'm transported to see you at my house, for we have great occasion for you.

Sganarel (*in a physician's gown, with a high crowned hat*). Hippocrates says—let's both be covered.

Géronte. Does Hippocrates say so?

Sganarel. Yes.

Géronte. In what chapter pray?

Sganarel. In his chapter—upon hats.

Géronte. Since Hippocrates says so, it must be done.

Sganarel. Mr. Doctor, having heard of the wonderful things—

Géronte. Who do you speak to, pray?

Sganarel. To you.

Géronte. I am not a doctor.

Sganarel. You are not a doctor?

Géronte. No indeed.

Sganarel. Seriously?

Géronte. Seriously. (*SGANAREL takes a cudgel and beats GÉRONTE.*) Oh! oh!
oh!

Sganarel. Now you are a doctor then, I had never any other license.

Géronte (to VALERE). What devil of a fellow have you brought me here?

Valere. I told you justly that 'twas a droll doctor.

Géronte. Yes, but I shall send him agoing with his drollery.

Lucas. Don't mind this, Maister, 'tis only for a joke.

Géronte. This kind of joking does not please me.

Sganarel. Sir, I ask pardon for the liberty I've taken.

Géronte. Sir, your servant.

Sganarel. I'm sorry—

Géronte. 'Tis nothing at all.

Sganarel. For the strokes of the cudgel—

Géronte. There's no harm.

Sganarel. Which I've had the honour to give you.

Géronte. Let us talk no more of that. I have a daughter, Sir, who is fallen
into a strange disease.

Sganarel. I'm rejoiced, Sir, that your daughter has need of me; and I
wish with all my heart that you had the same occasion likewise, you
and all your family, that I might manifest the desire I have of serving
you.

Géronte. I'm obliged to you for your good wishes.

Sganarel. I assure you 'tis from the bottom of my soul that I speak it.

Géronte. 'Tis too great an honour you do me—

Sganarel. What is your daughter's name?

Géronte. Lucinda.

Sganarel. Lucinda! Oh! a charming name to act the doctor on! Lucinda!

Géronte. I'll go and see a little what she's doing.

Sganarel. Who is that jolly dame there?

Géronte. She's nurse to a young child of mine.

SCENE IV

Sganarel (aside). S'life! What a lovely piece of stuff it is! Nurse!

Charming nurse, my doctorship is the very humble slave of your
nurseship, and I heartily wish I were the happy bantling that sucks
the milk of your good graces. (*Putting his hand on her bosom.*) All
my medicines, all my skill, all my capacity is at your service, and—

Lucas. With your leave, Mr. Doctor, pray now let alone my wife.

Sganarel. What, is she your wife?

Lucas. Yes.

Sganarel. Hah! I did not know it truly, but am rejoiced at it out of love to you both. (*Making as if he would embrace Lucas, embraces the nurse.*)

Lucas (*drawing SGANAREL away, and stepping between him and his wife.*)

Softly, an you please.

Sganarel. I do assure you that I'm overjoyed at your being joined together.

I congratulate her on having such a husband as you; and I congratulate you on having so handsome a wife, one so discreet and so well made as she is. (*He makes again as if he would embrace LUCAS, and slipping under his arm, embraces the nurse.*)

Lucas (*drawing him away again*). S'bobs, not so many complamants, I beseech ye!

Sganarel. Would not you have me rejoice with you for so lovely a conjunction?

Lucas. With me as much an you please; but forbear sarimony with my wife.

Sganarel. I take an equal part in both your good fortunes; and if I embrace you to witness my joy to you, I embrace her to witness the same to her. (*Continuing the same action.*)

Lucas (*drawing him away the third time*). 'Sbodikins, Mr. Doctor, what vagaries are here!

SCENE V

Géronte. Sir, they'll bring my daughter to you immediately.

Sganarel. I attend her, Sir, with all the power of medicine.

Géronte. Where is it?

Sganarel (*touching his forehead*). Within here.

Géronte. Mighty well.

Sganarel. But as I am concerned for all your family, I must make a trial of your nurse's milk a little, and visit her breast.

Lucas (*drawing him away, and whisking him round*). Nayh, nayh, I doan't want that to be done.

Sganarel. 'Tis the office of a doctor to inspect into the nipples of nurses.

Lucas. Be't your office how 'twill, I'm your zarvant for that.

Sganarel. Hast thou really the impudence to contradict a physician? Out there.

Lucas. I'se laugh at that.

Sganarel (looking askew at him). I'll give thee a fever.

Jacqueline (taking LUCAS by the arm, and whisking him round). Get thee gone hence; am not I big enough to defend myself if he does anything to me that he should not do?

Lucas. I won't have him meddle with thee.

Sganarel. Fie on the rascal, he's jealous of his wife.

Géronte. Here's my daughter.

SCENE VI

Sganarel. Is this the sick person?

Géronte. Yes, I've no daughter but she, and I should be in the utmost grief were she to die.

Sganarel. Let her take great care of that; she must not die without the doctor's order.

Géronte. A chair, here.

Sganarel (sits between GÉRONTE: and LUCINDA). This is a patient who is not so very distasteful, and I hold that a man in good health might make a shift well enough with her.

Géronte. You have made her laugh, Sir.

Sganarel. So much the better, when the doctor makes the patient laugh, 'tis the best symptom in the world. (To LUCINDA.) Well, what's the case? What ails you? What's the disorder you feel?

Lucinda (putting her hand to her mouth, head, and under her chin). Han, hi, hon, han.

Sganarel. Hey! what d'e say?

Lucinda (continuing the same motions). Han, hi, hon, han, han, hi, hon.

Sganarel. What?

Lucinda. Han, hi, hon.

Sganarel. Han, hi, hon, han, ha. I don't understand you. What the deuce of a language is this?

Géronte. That's her distemper, Sir. She's become dumb, and we have not yet been able to find out the cause of it; which accident has occasioned her marriage to be retarded.

Sganarel. Why so?

Géronte. He whom she was to marry would wait till she was cured before he'd bring things to a conclusion.

Sganarel. And who is this sot who would not have his wife dumb? Would to Heaven that mine had the same disease! I should take sufficient care not to have her cured.

Géronte. In short, Sir, we must entreat you to employ your utmost application to alleviate her illness.

Sganarel. Oh! don't put yourself in pain about it. But tell me a little; does this illness oppress her very much?

Géronte. Yes, Sir.

Sganarel. So much the better. Does she feel any great pains?

Géronte. Very great.

Sganarel. That's mighty well. Does she go you know where?

Géronte. Yes.

Sganarel. Plentifully?

Géronte. I know nothing of that.

Sganarel. Is the discharge laudable?

Géronte. I'm not skilled in those things.

Sganarel (*to LUCINDA*). Give me your arm. (*To GÉRONTE.*) Here's a pulse which denotes that your daughter is dumb.

Géronte. Why truly, Sir, that's her disease, you have found it out all at the first touch.

Sganarel. Ay, ay!

Jacqueline. Do but zee how a has divoined her ailment.

Sganarel. We great doctors know things instantly. An ignorant fellow would have been puzzled, and would have told you 'tis this, and 'tis that; but for my part, I hit the nail on the head, the very first stroke, and acquaint you that your daughter is dumb.

Géronte. Yes; but I should be glad that you could tell from whence that came.

Sganarel. There's nothing more easy. It came from hence that she has lost her speech.

Géronte. Very good; but the cause, pray, which made her lose her speech?

Sganarel. All our best authors will inform you that 'tis an impediment in the action of her tongue.

Géronte. But your sentiments, moreover, upon this impediment in the action of the tongue.

Sganarel. Aristotle says upon it—mighty fine things.

Géronte. I believe it.

Sganarel. Ah! that same was a great man.

Géronte. No doubt.

Sganarel. A mighty great man: a man that was greater (*holding out his arm from his elbow*) than me by all this. But to return to our reasoning. I hold that this impediment in the action of her tongue is

caused by certain humours, which amongst us scholars are called peccant humours; peccant, that's to say—peccant humours; so that the vapours formed by the exhalations of influences which rise in the region of diseases, coming—as we may say—to—Do you understand Latin?

Géronte. Not in the least.

Sganarel (*getting up hastily*). You don't understand Latin!

Géronte. No.

Sganarel (*making divers diverting postures*). Cabricias arci thuram, *catalamus, singulariter, nominativo, hæc musa*, the muse, *Bonus, bona, bonum, Deus sanctus, est ne oratio Latinas? etiam*, yes. *Quare, wherefore? quia substantivo, and adjectivum, concordat in generi, numerum, and casus.*¹

Géronte. Ah! wherefore did not I study!

Jacqueline. What a learned man is this!

Lucas. Yes, this is so vine, that I doan't understand a sillable of't.

Sganarel. For these vapours that I speak to you of, passing from the left side, where the liver is, to the right side, where the heart is, finds that the lungs, which we call in Latin *Armyan*, having communication with the brain, which in Greek we name *Nasmus*, by means of the hollow vein, which in Hebrew we call *Cubile*, meets in its way the said vapours, which fill the ventricles of the omoplate: and because the said vapours—comprehend this reasoning well, I pray you—and because the said vapours have a certain malignity—attend well to this, I conjure you.

Géronte. Yes.

Sganarel. Have a certain malignity which is caused—be attentive, if you please.

Géronte. I am so.

Sganarel. Which is caused by the acrimony of the humours engendered in the concavity of the diaphragm, it comes to pass that these vapours—*Ossabandus, nequeis, nequer, potarium, quipsa milus.*¹ That's exactly the cause of your daughter's being dumb.

Jacqueline. Ah! that's foinly zaid, our mon!

Lucas. Why ha' not I a tongue so well hanged?

Géronte. Nobody could reason better undoubtedly. There's but one thing in it which stuck in my stomach; and that's the place of the liver and heart. I apprehend that you place them otherwise than they are: that the heart is on the left side, and the liver on the right side.

1. Nonsense and gibberish [Ed.].

Sganarel. Yes, it was formerly so; but we have altered all that, and we now practise medicine after quite a new method.

Géronte. That's what I did not know, and I ask your pardon for my ignorance.

Sganarel. There's no harm. You are not obliged to be as learned as us.

Géronte. True: but Sir, what think you must be done with this disease?

Sganarel. What do I think must be done?

Géronte. Yes.

Sganarel. My advice is that they put her to bed; and that they make her take for a remedy a quantity of bread soaked in wine.

Géronte. Wherefore that, Sir?

Sganarel. Because that in bread and wine mixed together, there's a sympathetic virtue, which occasions talking. Don't you plainly see that they give no other thing to parrots, and that by eating this they learn to talk?

Géronte. That's true. Oh! the great man! Quickly, a quantity of bread and wine.

Sganarel. I'll return in the evening to see what condition she'll be in.

SCENE VII

Sganarel. (*to JACQUELINE*). Softly, you. (*To GÉRONTE.*) Sir, here's a nurse, for whom I must make up some few remedies.

Jacqueline. Who, I? I ha' the best health in the world.

Sganarel. So much the worse, Nurse, so much the worse. This high health is to be feared; and it won't be amiss to give you a little gentle bleeding, and administer a little dulcifying clyster.

Géronte. But, Sir, this is a method which I don't comprehend. Why let her blood when she has no illness?

Sganarel. No matter, the method is salutary; and as one drinks for thirst to come, one must likewise bleed for illness to come.

Jacqueline (going). Trath, I laugh at that; I'll not make a poticary's shop o' my carcass.

Sganarel. You are averse to physic; but we can make you subject to reason.

SCENE VIII

Sganarel. I give you good Morrow, Sir.

Géronte. Stay a little, if you please.

Sganarel. What would you do?

Géronte. Give you a fee, Sir.

Sganarel (*reaching out his hand behind him, while GÉRONTE opens his purse*). I won't take it, Sir.

Géronte. Sir.

Sganarel. No.

Géronte. Stay one moment.

Sganarel. By no means.

Géronte. Pray now.

Sganarel. You mistake.

Géronte. 'Tis done presently.

Sganarel. I won't do it.

Géronte. Hey!

Sganarel. 'Tis not money that induces me to practise.

Géronte. I believe it.

Sganarel (*after having taken the money*). Is this weight?

Géronte. Yes, Sir.

Sganarel. I am not a mercenary physician.

Géronte. I know it well.

Sganarel. Interest does not govern me.

Géronte. I have not that thought.

Sganarel (*alone, looking on the money he had received*). I' faith this does not go ill, and provided that—

SCENE IX

Leander. Sir, I have waited for you a long time, and am come to implore your assistance.

Sganarel (*feeling his pulse*). A very bad pulse this.

Leander. I am not sick, Sir; nor is it for that I come to you.

Sganarel. If you are not sick, why the deuce did you not say so?

Leander. No. To inform you of the affair in two words, my name is Leander, and I'm in love with Lucinda, whom you come to visit. But as all manner of access to her is blocked up from me by the ill temper of her father, I run the hazard of entreating you to endeavour to serve me in my amour, and to give me an opportunity of executing a stratagem I've invented to be able to speak a word or two with her, on which my life and happiness absolutely depend.

Sganarel. Who d'ye take me for? What? Dare you apply to me to serve you in your amour, and to debase the dignity of a physician by employments of this kind?

Leander. Don't make a noise, Sir!

Sganarel (*making him retreat*). I will do it; you are an impudent fellow.

Leander. Oh! Sir, softly.

Sganarel. An inconsiderate jackanapes.

Leander. Pray now.

Sganarel. I'll teach you that I'm not such a man, and that 'tis an extreme piece of insolence—

Leander (*taking out a purse*). Sir.

Sganarel (*taking the purse*). To think of employing me—I don't speak as to you, for you are an honest man, and I should rejoice to do you service. But there are certain impudent creatures in the world who take people for what they are not; and this, I must own to you, puts me in a passion.

Leander. I ask your pardon, Sir, for the liberty that—

Sganarel. You jest. What's the business?

Leander. Know then, Sir, that this disease which you would cure is a feigned disease. The doctors have reasoned upon it as they should do, and have not failed to say that it proceeds, one from the brain, one from the intestines, one from the spleen, one from the liver; but 'tis certain that love's the true cause of it, and that Lucinda counterfeited this disease only to deliver herself from a match which she had been importuned to. But for fear they should see us together, let us retire from hence, and I'll tell you as we go what I wish from you.

Sganarel. Come, Sir, you have given me an inconceivable sensibility for your love; and I'll spend all my physic in the affair, but the patient shall kick up, or else be yours.

ACT III

SCENE I

Leander. Methinks I am not amiss thus for an apothecary, and as the father has scarce ever seen me, this change of dress and periwig is sufficient, I believe, to disguise me.

Sganarel. Undoubtedly.

Leander. All I could wish would be to know five or six strong physical terms, to adorn my discourse, and give me the air of a learned man.

Sganarel. Come come, all that's not necessary; the habit sufficeth; I know no more of the matter than you.

Leander. What!

Sganarel. The deuce take me if I understand anything of physic. You are a gentleman, and I'll repose a confidence in you, as you have in me.

Leander. What, you are not actually—

Sganarel. No, I tell you, they made me a doctor in spite of my teeth. I never attempted to be so learned as that; my studies lasted only till I was six years old. I know not by what means this notion is come to 'em: but when I found that they would make me a doctor by violence, I resolved to be one at the expense of those I might have to do with. Nevertheless, you can't imagine how the error is spread about, and in what manner every one's possessed to believe me a skilful man. They come to seek me from all parts; and if things go on always the same, I intend to keep to physic all my lifetime. I find 'tis the best trade of all; for be it that we do good, or be it that we do ill, we are always paid after the same rate. The bad work never falls upon our back, and we cut out as we please the stuff we work on. A shoemaker can't spoil a scrap of leather in making a pair of shoes but he's obliged to pay sauce for it, when here we may spoil a man without costing one anything. The blunders are not ours; the fault's always in him that dies. In short, the good of this profession is that amongst the dead there is an honesty, a discretion the greatest in the world; you never find 'em complain of the physician that killed 'em.

Leander. 'Tis true, the dead are very honest people in this respect.

Sganarel (*observing men coming to him*). Here are people who look as if they came to consult me. (*To LEANDER.*) Go and wait for me near your mistress's house.

SCENE II

Thibaut. Zir, we come to search for ye, zon Perrin and I.

Sganarel. What's the matter?

Thibaut. His poor mother, whose naime is Parette, has been this zix months in a zick bed.

Sganarel (*holding out his hand as to receive money*). What would you have me do to her?

Thibaut. I'se would ha' ye, zir, gi' us some little druggery ware to heal her withal.

Sganarel. I must see what she's sick of.

Thibaut. She's zick of an hypocrisy, zir.

Sganarel. Of an hypocrisy?

Thibaut. Ay, that's to zay, she's bloated up all over, and folk do zay that 'tis a deal of zeriosities that she have in her body, and that her liver, her belly, or her spleen, as you would call it, in plaiice of making blood make nothing but water. She ha' one day out of two, the quotiguian fever, with lassitudes and pains in the muscles of her legs. One hears fleaims in her throat that are e'en ready to choke her. Zometimes she's ta'en with sincops and conversions, that we do think she's gone off. We have in our parish, a poticary, with reverence be it spoken, who has given her I know not how much historicks, and 'tave cost me moare than a douzen of good crawns in clysters may't please you, in apostumes which they made her take, in hyacinth infactions, and cordial portions. But all this, as they say, was noathing but a nointment of fiddle-faddle. He'd a' gi'n her some of a certain drug, which they call Ametile Wine; but I'se was under downright fear that 'twould send her to her forefathers, for they zay that thease great doctors kill I know not how many people with that zame invantion.

Sganarel (*holding his hand out all the while*). Let's come to the point, Friend, let's come to the point.

Thibaut. The point is, zir, that we are come to bag o' ye, to tell us what we mun do.

Sganarel. I don't understand you in the least.

Perrin. My mother is zick, zir, and here be two crawns which we ha' brought ye to gee us some cure.

Sganarel. Oh! I understand you. There's a lad that speaks clearly, and explains himself as he should do. You say that your mother is sick of a dropsy, that she's swelled all over the body, that she has a fever, with pains in her legs, and that she's taken by turns, with sincopes and convulsions, that's to say, with fainting fits.

Perrin. Ay, yes, zir, that's exactly the matter.

Sganarel. I comprehended at once what you said. You have a father who does not know what he says. Now then you'd have a remedy from me?

Perrin. Ay, zir.

Sganarel. A remedy to cure her?

Perrin. That's what I mean.

Sganarel. Take this, there's a piece of cheese, which you must make her take.

Perrin. Cheese, zir.

Sganarel. Yes, 'tis prepared cheese, in which there is mixed gold, coral, pearls, and abundance of other costly things.

Perrin. Zir, we're mainly obliged t'ye, and we'll go make her take it this very instont.

Sganarel. Go. If she dies, don't fail to have her buried as handsomely as you can.

SCENE III

Sganarel. Here's the jolly nurse. Ah! nurse of my heart, I'm transported with this meeting; the sight of you is rhubarb, cassia, and senna, which purge away all melancholy from my mind.

Jacqueline. By my troth, Mr. Doctor, that's too foinly said for me, I se doan't understand your Lattan at all.

Sganarel. Get sick, I beseech you, Nurse, get sick for my sake. I should take all the pleasure in the world to cure you.

Jacqueline. Your zarvant, zir, I'd much rather choose not to be cured.

Sganarel. I pity you, fair nurse, in having such a jealous troublesome husband as he you have.

Jacqueline. What would ye ha' me do, zir, 'tis a penitence for my offences, and where the goat's tied, there she must browse.

Sganarel. What? Such a rustic as that? A fellow that watches you continually, and won't let anybody speak to you?

Jacqueline. Alack, you've not zeen anything of'n yet; this is nothing but a small zample of his ill nature.

Sganarel. Is it possible, and can a fellow have so mean a spirit, as to use such a person as you are, ill? Ah! there are some, sweet nurse, that I know, and who are not far from hence, that would think themselves happy but to kiss the little tops of your toes! Why should one so well made fall into such hands? A mere animal, a brute, a fool, a sot— Forgive me, Nurse, for speaking in this manner of your husband.

Jacqueline. Ah! Sir, I se know well enow that a deserves all those naimes.

Sganarel. Ay, undoubtedly, Nurse, he does deserve 'em, and he deserves further that you should plant something on his head to punish him for the suspicions he has.

Jacqueline. 'Tis very true that if I se had nothing in sight but his interest, it might drive me to do some strange thing.

Sganarel. I'faith you'd not do ill to be revenged on him with someone. 'Tis a fellow, I tell you, who richly deserves it, and if I were fortunate enough, fair nurse, to be pitched on for— (*Whilst SGANAREL reaches out his arm to embrace JACQUELINE, LUCAS thrusts his head*

under his arm, and steps between them; SGANAREL and JACQUELINE look at LUCAS, and go off on different sides.)

SCENE IV

Géronte. Ho, Lucas, hast thou not seen our doctor here?

Lucas. Yes, the deuce had 'en, I'se ha' zeen him, and my wife too.

Géronte. Where is't that he can be then?

Lucas. I don't know; but I wish he were at the devil.

Géronte. Go and see a little how my daughter does.

SCENE V

Géronte. Oh, Sir, I have been asking where you were.

Sganarel. I was amusing myself in your court, to carry off the superfluity of the liquor. How does the patient do?

Géronte. A little worse since your remedy.

Sganarel. So much the better. 'Tis a sign it operates.

Géronte. Yes; but I fear lest it choke her in operating.

Sganarel. Don't be in pain about that; I have medicines which despise all distempers, and I should be glad to see her at death's door.

Géronte. Who is this man you bring here?

Sganarel (making signs with his hand that it is an apothecary). 'Tis—

Géronte. What?

Sganarel. He—

Géronte. Hey!

Sganarel. Who—

Géronte. I understand you.

Sganarel. Your daughter will have occasion for him.

SCENE VI

Jacqueline. Here, zir, is your daughter, she desires to walk a little.

Sganarel. That will do her good. (*To LEANDER.*) Go to her, Mr. Apothecary, feel her pulse a little, that I may consult with you by and by about her distemper. (*Here he takes GÉRONTE to one end of the stage, and putting one arm over his shoulder, puts his hand under his chin, to prevent him from turning his head towards LEANDER and LUCINDA.*) Sir, 'tis a great and subtle question among the doctors whether women are more easy to cure than men. Pray hearken to this if you please. Some say No, others say Yes; and for my part, I say both Yes

and No, forasmuch as the incongruity of the opaque humours which meet in the natural modification of women being the cause that the brutal part will always bear rule over the sensitive, we see that the inequality of their opinions depends on the oblique motion of the circle of the moon, and as the sun, which darts its rays on the concavity of the earth, finds—

Lucinda (to LEANDER). No, I'm not capable of changing my sentiments.
Géronte. My daughter speaks! O the great power of medicine! O wonderful physician! How much am I obliged to you, Sir, for this marvellous cure! And what can I do for you, after such a piece of service?

Sganarel (walking about the stage, and fanning himself with his hat).
This distemper has put me to a vast deal of pains.

Lucinda. Yes, Father, I have recovered my speech; but I've recovered it to tell you that I will never have any other husband than Leander, and that 'tis in vain you intend to give me Horatio.

Géronte. But—

Lucinda. Nothing is capable of shaking the resolution I have taken.

Géronte. What!

Lucinda. You'll oppose me in vain with fine arguments.

Géronte. If—

Lucinda. All your talk will signify nothing.

Géronte. I—

Lucinda. 'Tis a thing I'm determined on.

Géronte. But—

Lucinda. 'Tis not paternal power that shall oblige me to marry whether I will or not.

Géronte. I have—

Lucinda. You have liberty to make all your efforts.

Géronte. It—

Lucinda. My heart cannot submit to this tyranny.

Géronte. There—

Lucinda. And I'll rather cast myself into a convent than marry a man I don't like.

Géronte. But—

Lucinda. No. By no means. Not at all. You lose your time. I will not do it. That's resolved.

Géronte. Oh! what an impetuosity of speech! There's no way of resisting it. (*To SGANAREL.*) Sir, I desire you'll make her dumb again.

Sganarel. 'Tis a thing which is impossible to me. All I can do to serve you is to make you deaf, if you will.

Géronte. I thank you. (*To LUCINDA.*) Think then—

Lucinda. No, all your reasons will gain nothing on my mind.

Géronte. Thou shalt marry Horatio this night.

Lucinda. I'll rather marry death.

Sganarel (*to GÉRONTÉ*). Good now, hold a little, let me prescribe in this affair. 'Tis a disease that affects her, and I know what remedy must be applied to it.

Géronte. Is it possible, Sir, that you can likewise cure this sickness of the mind?

Sganarel. Yes, let me alone. I have remedies for everything; and our apothecary will assist us in this cure. (*To LEANDER.*) One word. You see that the affection she has for this Leander is altogether contrary to her father's will, that there's no time to lose, that the humours are very acrimonious, and that 'tis necessary to find out speedily a remedy for this illness, which may get ahead by delay; for my part I can see but only one for it, which is a dose of runaway purgative mixed as it should be with two drachms of matrimonium in pills. Perhaps she'll make some difficulty of taking this medicine, but as you are an able man in your business, it belongs to you to bring her to it, and to make her swallow the thing as well as you can. Go and make her take a little turn in the garden, in order to prepare the humours, whilst I hold her father here in discourse; but above all lose no time. To the remedy, quick, to the specific remedy.

SCENE VII

Géronte. What drugs, sir, are those you were speaking of? I think that I never heard 'em named before.

Sganarel. They are drugs which people make use of upon urgent occasions.

Géronte. Did you ever see an insolence like to hers?

Sganarel. Girls are sometimes a little headstrong.

Géronte. You can't think how she dotes upon this Leander.

Sganarel. The heat of the blood occasions this in young minds.

Géronte. For my part, ever since I discovered the violence of this love I have always kept my girl shut up.

Sganarel. You have done wisely.

Géronte. And I effectually prevented their having any communication together.

Sganarel. Mighty well.

Géronte. Some folly would have come on't had I suffered them to see one another.

Sganarel. Undoubtedly.

Géronte. And I believe the girl would have run away with him.

Sganarel. 'Tis well reasoned.

Géronte. They tell me that he does his utmost endeavours to come to the speech of her.

Sganarel. Ridiculous creature!

Géronte. But he'll lose his time.

Sganarel. Ay, ay.

Géronte. For I'll effectually prevent him from seeing of her.

Sganarel. He has not to do with a fool; you know tricks that he knows nothing of. He's no blockhead who is sharper than you.

SCENE VIII

Lucas. Ad's bobs, zir, here's a vine hurly-burly business; your daughter's fled away with her Liandar. 'Twas he that was the poticary; and there's Mr. Doctor that ha' made this vine operation.

Géronte. What, murder me in this manner? Here, a commissary, and hinder him from going off. Ah, villain, I'll make thee suffer the law.

Lucas. Ah! I'foith, Mr. Doctor, you shall be hanged; only budge not from hence.

SCENE IX

Martina (*to LUCAS*). Ad's my life, what plague have I had to find out this house! Tell me some news a little of the doctor I gave you.

Lucas. There a is, just going to be hanged.

Martina. What, my husband hanged? Alas! what has he done to come to that?

Lucas. He ha' made our maister's daughter to be carried off.

Martina. Alas! my dear husband, is it really true that they are going to hang thee?

Sganarel. Thou seest. Ah!

Martina. Must thou die in the presence of so many people?

Sganarel. What wouldst thou have me do in it?

Martina. Yet if thou hadst but made an end of cutting our wood, I could have taken some comfort.

Sganarel. Be gone from hence; you break my heart.

Martina. No; I'll stay to encourage thee to die; I'll not leave thee till I have seen thee hanged.

Sganarel. Oh!

SCENE X

Géronte (to SGANAREL). The commissary will come presently, and they'll put you in a place where they shall be answerable to me for you.

Sganarel (kneeling). Alas! can't this be changed into a few strokes of a cudgel?

Géronte. No, no, justice shall order it. But what do I see?

SCENE XI

Leander. Sir, I'm come to make Leander appear before you, and to put Lucinda again in your power. We had both of us a design to go off together, and be married; but this enterprise has given place to a more honourable proceeding. I don't design to rob you of your daughter, and 'tis from your hand alone that I'll receive her. What I would say to you, Sir, is that I have just now received letters by which I learn that my uncle is dead, and that I am heir to all his effects.

Géronte. Sir, your virtue is to me of sufficient value, and I give you my daughter with the greatest pleasure in the world.

Sganarel (aside). There physic has got a notable 'scape!

Martina. Since you'll not be hanged, thank me for your being a doctor; for 'twas I that procured thee that honour.

Sganarel. Yes, 'twas you that procured me I know not how many thwacks of a cudgel.

Leander (to SGANAREL). The effect is too good to resent that.

Sganarel. Be it so. (*To MARTINA.*) I forgive thee those blows, in favour of the dignity thou hast raised me to: but prepare thyself from henceforth to live in great respect with a man of my consequence, and consider that the wrath of a physician is more to be feared than can be imagined.

Richard Sheridan

1751–1816

Richard Brinsley Butler Sheridan was born in Dublin October 30, 1751. His father, Thomas, was an actor. Richard went to Harrow when he was eleven years old, where he studied for six years. By 1771 the Sheridan family had moved to Bath. There Sheridan met Elizabeth Ann Linley, the beautiful 16-year-old daughter of a composer. After a romantic courtship, the two were married, in 1773, and went to live in London.

Although the young couple had no income, they took a house in a fashionable neighborhood and began to live far beyond their means. Sheridan, who had previously collaborated in writing one play, now turned seriously to writing as a means of living. *The Rivals*, produced on January 17, 1775, was an instant success.

In June, 1776, Sheridan bought a share of the Drury Lane Theater, where *The School for Scandal* was produced the following year. It, too, was extremely popular, drawing large houses. *The Critic* was produced in 1779. This was the last of Sheridan's important plays. From then on, his life was devoted to politics. He entered Parliament in 1780 and soon became famous as the best orator of the time. His last years were filled with disappointments, and he was always heavily in debt. His wife died in 1792, and he remarried in 1795.

In 1812 he failed to be re-elected to Parliament. Shortly before, the Drury Lane Theater had burned. He died July 7, 1816, very poor, but was buried with great ceremony in Westminster Abbey.

The *School for Scandal* is a comedy of manners, one of the best, if not the best, of its kind in English. Comedies of manners had become very popular in the Restoration period in England, as part of

the general joyous heel-kicking reaction against the strict Puritanism of the Cromwells. When Englishmen welcomed Charles II back from France, they welcomed the French influence in cultural matters as well, especially in the drama. Molière was the literary hero of the day.

The first plays to appear in the newly reopened English theaters ridiculed all aspects of Puritan morality. Their subject matter was the flirtations and intrigues of sophisticated society. Their heroes were glib-talking dandies; their heroines beautiful flirts. If Restoration comedy writers added little to a profound understanding of human nature, they vividly pictured the customs and atmosphere of their world and in doing so wrote some very amusing plays.

English drama, from the beginning of the Restoration in the middle 1600's gradually became more sentimental and superficial until Sheridan, near the end of the eighteenth century, gave England the last great examples of Restoration comedy in *The Rivals* and *The School for Scandal*.

The "School" of Sheridan's play is a fashionable society of clever but intellectually limited people whose favorite entertainment is slander. Sheridan's thesis might be expressed as "the devil finds work for idlers' tongues."

Because he was picturing a society rather than individuals, Sheridan was content to use stock characters which would have been easily recognizable to English playgoers of his time. Charles Surface is the impulsive but basically good young man. Joseph is the pretender whose efforts to keep up a good appearance lead to his downfall. Lady Teazle is the discontented young woman who has married for money. Sir Peter Teazle is the illusione old man who expects to be appreciated for himself rather than his possessions.

Out of these materials—a stock cast, an unlikely plot, and such stage conventions as asides—Sheridan makes a hilarious and essentially moral play. His most effective tool is the sparkling dialogue, packed with epigrams, that was so highly prized in the drawing rooms of his day. Sheridan could mix a pun with an epigram and produce a revealing truth as few dramatists have been able to do; for example, "I never think them [my friends] in such danger as when Candour undertakes their defence."

There are two great scenes in *The School for Scandal*—the auction of the family portraits, and the scandal-hiding screen—which a lesser talent would have reduced to slapstick. Under Sheridan's

touch, however, they are so effective that they have been rightfully famous for over 180 years.

The two foibles, scandal and extravagance, which *The School for Scandal* exposes, were chosen by Sheridan to epitomize the temper of upper-class society as he saw it. But behind these lies the hypocrisy of the upper classes—and this is the evil that the play most powerfully attacks.

The School for Scandal

CAST OF CHARACTERS

AS ACTED AT DRURY LANE THEATRE, MAY, 1777

SIR PETER TEAZLE, *Mr. King*
SIR OLIVER SURFACE, *Mr. Yates*
JOSEPH SURFACE, *Mr. Palmer*
CHARLES SURFACE, *Mr. Smith*
CRABTREE, *Mr. Parsons*
SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE, *Mr. Dodd*
ROWLEY, *Mr. Aickin*
TRIP, *Mr. LaMash*
MOSES, *Mr. Baddeley*
SNAKE, *Mr. Packer*
CARELESS, *Mr. Farren*
LADY TEAZLE, *Mrs. Abington*
MARIA, *Miss P. Hopkins*
LADY SNEERWELL, *Miss Sherry*
MRS. CANDOUR, *Miss Pope*

*and other COMPANIONS to CHARLES (SURFACE),
SERVANTS, etc.*

SCENE: LONDON

ACT I

SCENE 1—LADY SNEERWELL'S house

LADY SNEERWELL at the dressing-table. SNAKE drinking chocolate.

Lady Sneerwell. The paragraphs, you say, Mr. Snake, were all inserted? *Snake.* They were, madam, and as I copied them myself in a feigned hand, there can be so suspicion whence they came.

Lady Sneerwell. Did you circulate the reports of Lady Brittle's intrigue with Captain Boastall?

Snake. That is in as fine a train as your ladyship could wish—in the common course of things, I think it must reach Mrs. Clackit's ears within four-and-twenty hours; and then, you know, the business is as good as done.

Lady Sneerwell. Why, truly, Mrs. Clackit has a very pretty talent, and a great deal of industry.

Snake. True, madam, and has been tolerably successful in her day: to my knowledge, she has been the cause of six matches being broken off, and three sons being disinherited, of four forced elopements, as many close confinements, nine separate maintenances, and two divorces; nay, I have more than once traced her causing a *tête-à-tête* in the *Town and Country Magazine*, when the parties perhaps had never seen each other's faces before in the course of their lives.

Lady Sneerwell. She certainly has talents, but her manner is gross.

Snake. 'Tis very true—she generally designs well, has a free tongue, and a bold invention; but her colouring is too dark, and her outline often extravagant. She wants that delicacy of hint, and mellowness of sneer, which distinguish your ladyship's scandal.

Lady Sneerwell. Ah! you are partial, Snake.

Snake. Not in the least; everybody allows that Lady Sneerwell can do more with a word or a look than many can with the most laboured detail, even when they happen to have a little truth on their side to support it.

Lady Sneerwell. Yes, my dear Snake; and I am no hypocrite to deny the satisfaction I reap from the success of my efforts. Wounded myself, in the early part of my life, by the envenomed tongue of slander, I confess I have since known no pleasure equal to the reducing others to the level of my own injured reputation.

Snake. Nothing can be more natural. But, Lady Sneerwell, there is one af-

fair in which you have lately employed me, wherein, I confess, I am at a loss to guess your motives.

Lady Sneerwell. I conceive you mean with respect to my neighbour, Sir Peter Teazle, and his family?

Snake. I do; here are two young men, to whom Sir Peter has acted as a kind of guardian since their father's death; the elder possessing the most amiable character, and universally well spoken of; the youngest, the most dissipated and extravagant young fellow in the kingdom, without friends or character—the former an avowed admirer of your ladyship, and apparently your favourite; the latter attached to Maria, Sir Peter's ward, and confessedly beloved by her. Now, on the face of these circumstances, it is utterly unaccountable to me, why you, the widow of a city knight, with a good jointure, should not close with the passion of a man of such character and expectations as Mr. Surface; and more so why you should be so uncommonly earnest to destroy the mutual attachment subsisting between his brother Charles and Maria.

Lady Sneerwell. Then, at once to unravel this mystery, I must inform you that love has no share whatever in the intercourse between Mr. Surface and me.

Snake. No!

Lady Sneerwell. His real attachment is to Maria, or her fortune; but, finding in his brother a favoured rival, he has been obliged to mask his pretensions, and profit by my assistance.

Snake. Yet still I am more puzzled why you should interest yourself in his success.

Lady Sneerwell. Heav'ns! how dull you are! Cannot you surmise the weakness which I hitherto, through shame, have concealed even from *you*? Must I confess that Charles—that libertine, that extravagant, that bankrupt in fortune and reputation—that he it is for whom I am thus anxious and malicious, and to gain whom I would sacrifice everything?

Snake. Now, indeed, your conduct appears consistent; but how came you and Mr. Surface so confidential?

Lady Sneerwell. For our mutual interest. I have found him out a long time since—I know him to be artful, selfish, and malicious—in short, a sentimental knave.

Snake. Yet, Sir Peter vows he has not his equal in England—and, above all, he praises him as a man of sentiment.

Lady Sneerwell. True; and with the assistance of his sentiment and hy-

pocrisy he has brought him [Sir Peter] entirely into his interest with regard to Maria.

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. Mr. Surface.

Lady Sneerwell. Show him up.

(*Exit SERVANT.*)

He generally calls about this time. I don't wonder at people's giving him to me for a lover.

Enter JOSEPH SURFACE.

Joseph Surface. My dear Lady Sneerwell, how do you do to-day? Mr. Snake, your most obedient.

Lady Sneerwell. Snake has just been arraigning me on our mutual attachment, but I have informed him of our real views; you know how useful he has been to us; and, believe me, the confidence is not ill placed.

Joseph Surface. Madam, it is impossible for me to suspect a man of Mr. Snake's sensibility and discernment.

Lady Sneerwell. Well, well, no compliments now; but tell me when you saw your mistress, Maria—or, what is more material to me, your brother.

Joseph Surface. I have not seen either since I left you; but I can inform you that they never meet. Some of your stories have taken a good effect on Maria.

Lady Sneerwell. Ah, my dear Snake! the merit of this belongs to you. But do your brother's distresses increase?

Joseph Surface. Every hour; I am told he has had another execution in the house yesterday; in short, his dissipation and extravagance exceed anything I ever heard of.

Lady Sneerwell. Poor Charles!

Joseph Surface. True, madam; notwithstanding his vices, one can't help feeling for him. Aye, poor Charles! I'm sure I wish it was in *my* power to be of any essential service to him. For the man who does not share in the distresses of a brother, even though merited by his own misconduct, deserves—

Lady Sneerwell. O lud! you are going to be moral, and forget that you are among friends.

Joseph Surface. Egad, that's true! I'll keep that sentiment till I see Sir Peter. However, it is certainly a charity to rescue Maria from such a

libertine, who, if he is to be reclaimed, can be so only by a person of your ladyship's superior accomplishments and understanding.

Snake. I believe, Lady Sneerwell, here's company coming—I'll go and copy the letter I mentioned to you.—Mr. Surface, your most obedient.

(*Exit SNAKE.*)

Joseph Surface. Sir, your very devoted.—Lady Sneerwell, I am very sorry you have put any further confidence in that fellow.

Lady Sneerwell. Why so?

Joseph Surface. I have lately detected him in frequent conference with old Rowley, who was formerly my father's steward, and has never, you know, been a friend of mine.

Lady Sneerwell. And do you think he would betray us?

Joseph Surface. Nothing more likely: take my word for't, Lady Sneerwell, that fellow hasn't virtue enough to be faithful even to his own villainy.—Hah! Maria!

Enter MARIA.

Lady Sneerwell. Maria, my dear, how do you do? What's the matter?

Maria. Oh! there is that disagreeable lover of mine, Sir Benjamin Backbite, has just called at my guardian's, with his odious uncle, Crabtree; so I slipped out, and run hither to avoid them.

Lady Sneerwell. Is that all?

Joseph Surface. If my brother Charles had been of the party, ma'am, perhaps you would not have been so much alarmed.

Lady Sneerwell. Nay, now you are severe; for I dare swear the truth of the matter is, Maria heard *you* were here; but, my dear, what has Sir Benjamin done, that you should avoid him so?

Maria. Oh, he has done nothing—but 'tis for what he has said—his conversation is a perpetual libel on all his acquaintance.

Joseph Surface. Aye, and the worst of it is, there is no advantage in not knowing him; for he'll abuse a stranger just as soon as his best friend—and his uncle's as bad.

Lady Sneerwell. Nay, but we should make allowance; Sir Benjamin is a wit and a poet.

Maria. For my part, I own, madam, wit loses its respect with me, when I see it in company with malice.—What do you think, Mr. Surface?

Joseph Surface. Certainly, madam; to smile at the jest which plants a thorn in another's breast is to become a principal in the mischief.

Lady Sneerwell. Pshaw! there's no possibility of being witty without a lit-

tle ill nature: the malice of a good thing is the barb that makes it stick.—What's your opinion, Mr. Surface?

Joseph Surface. To be sure, madam, that conversation, where the spirit of raillery is suppressed, will ever appear tedious and insipid.

Maria. Well, I'll not debate how far scandal may be allowable; but in a man, I am sure, it is always contemptible. We have pride, envy, rivalship, and a thousand motives to deprecate each other; but the male slanderer must have the cowardice of a woman before he can traduce one.

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. Madam, Mrs. Candour is below, and, if your ladyship's at leisure, will leave her carriage.

Lady Sneerwell. Beg her to walk in. *(Exit SERVANT.)*

Now Maria, however here is a character to your taste; for, though Mrs. Candour is a little talkative, everybody allows her to be the best-natured and best sort of woman.

Maria. Yes, with a very gross affectation of good nature and benevolence, she does more mischief than the direct malice of old Crabtree.

Joseph Surface. I'faith 'tis very true, Lady Sneerwell; whenever I hear the current running against the characters of my friends, I never think them in such danger as when Candour undertakes their defence.

Lady Sneerwell. Hush!—here she is!

Enter MRS. CANDOUR.

Mrs. Candour. My dear Lady Sneerwell, how have you been this century?—Mr. Surface, what news do you hear?—though indeed it is no matter, for I think one hears nothing else but scandal.

Joseph Surface. Just so, indeed, madam.

Mrs. Candour. Ah, Maria! child—what, is the whole affair off between you and Charles? His extravagance, I presume—the town talks of nothing else.

Maria. I am very sorry, ma'am, the town has so little to do.

Mrs. Candour. True, true, child: but there is no stopping people's tongues. I own I was hurt to hear it, as indeed I was to learn, from the same quarter, that your guardian, Sir Peter, and Lady Teazle have not agreed lately so well as could be wished.

Maria. 'Tis strangely impertinent for people to busy themselves so.

Mrs. Candour. Very true, child, but what's to be done? People will talk—

there's no preventing it. Why, it was but yesterday I was told that Miss Gadabout had eloped with Sir Filigree Flirt. But, Lord! there's no minding what one hears—though, to be sure, I had this from very good authority.

Maria. Such reports are highly scandalous.

Mrs. Candour. So they are, child—shameful, shameful! But the world is so censorious, no character escapes. Lord, now who would have suspected your friend, Miss Prim, of an indiscretion? Yet such is the ill nature of people, that they say her uncle stopped her last week, just as she was stepping into the York Diligence with her dancing-master.

Maria. I'll answer for't there are no grounds for the report.

Mrs. Candour. Oh, no foundation in the world, I dare swear; no more, probably, than for the story circulated last month, of Mrs. Festino's affair with Colonel Cassino; though, to be sure, that matter was never rightly cleared up.

Joseph Surface. The licence of invention some people take is monstrous indeed.

Maria. 'Tis so. But, in my opinion, those who report such things are equally culpable.

Mrs. Candour. To be sure they are; talebearers are as bad as the talemakers—'tis an old observation, and a very true one—but what's to be done, as I said before? how will you prevent people from talking? To-day, Mrs. Clackit assured me Mr. and Mrs. Honeymoon were at last become mere man and wife, like the rest of their acquaintances. She likewise hinted that a certain widow, in the next street, had got rid of her dropsy and recovered her shape in a most surprising manner. And at the same time Miss Tattle, who was by, affirmed that Lord Buffalo had discovered his lady at a house of no extraordinary fame—and that Sir Harry Bouquet and Tom Saunter were to measure swords on a similar provocation. But, Lord, do you think I would report these things! No, no! talebearers, as I said before, are just as bad as tale-makers.

Joseph Surface. Ah! Mrs. Candour, if everybody had your forbearance and good nature!

Mrs. Candour. I confess, Mr. Surface, I cannot bear to hear people attacked behind their backs, and when ugly circumstances come out against one's acquaintance I own I always love to think the best. By the by, I hope it is not true that your brother is absolutely ruined?

Joseph Surface. I am afraid his circumstances are very bad indeed, ma'am.

Mrs. Candour. Ah!—I heard so—but you must tell him to keep up his spirits—everybody almost is in the same way! Lord Spindle, Sir Thomas Splint, Captain Quinze, and Mr. Nickit—all up, I hear, within this week; so, if Charles is undone, he'll find half his acquaintances ruined too—and that, you know, is a consolation.

Joseph Surface. Doubtless, ma'am—a very great one.

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. Mr. Crabtree and Sir Benjamin Backbite. (Exit SERVANT.)

Lady Sneerwell. So, Maria, you see your lover pursues you; positively you shan't escape.

Enter CRABTREE and SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE.

Crabtree. Lady Sneerwell, I kiss your hands. Mrs. Candour, I don't believe you are acquainted with my nephew, Sir Benjamin Backbite? Egad, ma'am, he has a pretty wit, and is a pretty poet too; isn't he, Lady Sneerwell?

Sir Benjamin. O fie, uncle!

Crabtree. Nay, egad it's true—I'll back him at a rebus or a charade against the best rhymer in the kingdom. Has your ladyship heard the epigram he wrote last week on Lady Frizzle's feather catching fire?—Do, Benjamin, repeat it—or the charade you made last night extempore at Mrs. Drowzie's *conversazione*. Come now; your *first* is the name of a fish, your *second* a great naval commander, and—

Sir Benjamin. Uncle, now—prithee—

Crabtree. I'faith, ma'am, 'twould surprise you to hear how ready he is at these things.

Lady Sneerwell. I wonder, Sir Benjamin, you never publish anything.

Sir Benjamin. To say truth, ma'am, 'tis very vulgar to print; and, as my little productions are mostly satires and lampoons on particular people, I find they circulate more by giving copies in confidence to the friends of the parties—however, I have some love elegies, which, when favoured with this lady's smiles, I mean to give to the public.

Crabtree. 'Fore heav'n, ma'am, they'll immortalize you!—you'll be handed down to posterity like Petrarch's Laura, or Waller's Sacharissa.¹

Sir Benjamin. Yes, madam, I think you will like them, when you shall see

1. Edmund Waller's poetic name for Lady Dorothy Sidney.

them on a beautiful quarto page, where a neat rivulet of text shall murmur through a meadow of margin. 'Fore gad, they will be the most elegant things of their kind!

Crabtree. But, ladies, that's true—have you heard the news?

Mrs. Candour. What, sir, do you mean the report of—

Crabtree. No, ma'am, that's not it. Miss Nicely is going to be married to her own footman.

Mrs. Candour. Impossible!

Crabtree. Ask Sir Benjamin.

Sir Benjamin. 'Tis very true, ma'am—everything is fixed, and the wedding liveries bespoke.

Crabtree. Yes—and they *do* say there were pressing reasons for it.

Lady Sneerwell. Why, I *have* heard something of this before.

Mrs. Candour. It can't be—and I wonder anyone should believe such a story of so prudent a lady as Miss Nicely.

Sir Benjamin. O lud! ma'am, that's the very reason 'twas believed at once.

She has always been so *cautious* and so *reserved*, that everybody was sure there was some reason for it at bottom.

Mrs. Candour. Why, to be sure, a tale of scandal is as fatal to the credit of a prudent lady of her stamp as a fever is generally to those of the strongest constitutions; but there is a sort of puny, sickly reputation that is always ailing, yet will outlive the robuster characters of a hundred prudes.

Sir Benjamin. True, madam, there are valetudinarians in reputation as well as constitution, who, being conscious of their weak part, avoid the least breath of air, and supply their want of stamina by care and circumspection.

Mrs. Candour. Well, but this may be all a mistake. You know, Sir Benjamin, very trifling circumstances often give rise to the most injurious tales.

Crabtree. That they do, I'll be sworn, ma'am. Did you ever hear how Miss Piper came to lose her lover and her character last summer at Tunbridge?—Sir Benjamin, you remember it?

Sir Benjamin. Oh, to be sure!—the most whimsical circumstance—

Lady Sneerwell. How was it, pray?

Crabtree. Why, one evening, at Mrs. Ponto's assembly, the conversation happened to turn on the difficulty of breeding Nova Scotia sheep in this country. Says a young lady in company, "I have known instances of it; for Miss Letitia Piper, a first cousin of mine, had a Nova Scotia sheep that produced her twins." "What!" cries the old Dowager Lady

Dundizzy (who you know is as deaf as a post), “has Miss Piper had twins?” This mistake, as you may imagine, threw the whole company into a fit of laughing. However, ’twas the next morning everywhere reported, and in a few days believed by the whole town, that Miss Letitia Piper had actually been brought to bed of a fine boy and a girl—and in less than a week there were people who could name the father, and the farmhouse where the babies were put out to nurse!

Lady Sneerwell. Strange, indeed!

Crabtree. Matter of fact, I assure you.—O lud! Mr. Surface, pray is it true that your uncle, Sir Oliver, is coming home?

Joseph Surface. Not that I know of, indeed, sir.

Crabtree. He has been in the East Indias a long time. You can scarcely remember him, I believe. Sad comfort, whenever he returns, to hear how your brother has gone on!

Joseph Surface. Charles has been imprudent, sir, to be sure; but I hope no busy people have already prejudiced Sir Oliver against him—he may reform.

Sir Benjamin. To be sure he may—for my part I never believed him to be so utterly void of principle as people say—and though he has lost all his friends, I am told nobody is better spoken of by the Jews.

Crabtree. That’s true, egad, nephew. If the old Jewry were a ward, I believe Charles would be an alderman; no man more popular there, ’fore gad! I hear he pays as many annuities as the Irish tontine;² and that, whenever he’s sick, they have prayers for the recovery of his health in the Synagogue.

Sir Benjamin. Yet no man lives in greater splendour. They tell me, when he entertains his friends, he can sit down to dinner with a dozen of his own securities; have a score [of] tradesmen writing in the antechamber, and an officer behind every guest’s chair.

Joseph Surface. This may be entertainment to you, gentlemen, but you pay very little regard to the feelings of a brother.

Maria. Their malice is intolerable!—*Lady Sneerwell*, I must wish you a good morning—I’m not very well. (Exit MARIA.)

Mrs. Candour. O dear! she changes colour very much!

Lady Sneerwell. Do, Mrs. Candour, follow her—she may want assistance.

Mrs. Candour. That I will, with all my soul, ma’am. Poor dear girl! who knows what her situation may be! (Exit MRS. CANDOUR.)

2. In 1773 and thereafter, the Irish parliament raised considerable revenues by selling life annuities to subscribers. The “tontine” plan took its name from the inventor, Tonti, an Italian banker.

Lady Sneerwell. 'Twas nothing but that she could not bear to hear Charles reflected on, notwithstanding their difference.

Sir Benjamin. The young lady's *penchant* is obvious.

Crabtree. But, Benjamin, you mustn't give up the pursuit for that; follow her, and put her into good humour. Repeat her some of your own verses. Come, I'll assist you.

Sir Benjamin. Mr. Surface, I did not mean to hurt you; but depend upon't your brother is utterly undone. (*Going.*)

Crabtree. O lud, aye! undone as ever man was—can't raise a guinea. (*Going.*)

Sir Benjamin. And everything sold, I'm told, that was movable. (*Going.*)

Crabtree. I have seen one that was at his house—not a thing left but some empty bottles that were overlooked, and the family pictures, which I believe are framed in the wainscot. (*Going.*)

Sir Benjamin. And I am very sorry to hear also some bad stories against him. (*Going.*)

Crabtree. Oh, he has done many mean things, that's certain. (*Going.*)

Sir Benjamin. But, however, as he's your brother— (*Going.*)

Crabtree. We'll tell you all, another opportunity.

(*Exeunt CRABTREE and SIR BENJAMIN.*)

Lady Sneerwell. Ha, ha! ha! 'tis very hard for them to leave a subject they have not quite run down.

Joseph Surface. And I believe the abuse was no more acceptable to your ladyship than to Maria.

Lady Sneerwell. I doubt ³ her affections are farther engaged than we imagined; but the family are to be here this evening, so you may as well dine where you are, and we shall have an opportunity of observing farther; in the meantime, I'll go and plot mischief, and you shall study sentiments. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II—SIR PETER TEAZLE's *house*

Enter SIR PETER.

Sir Peter. When an old bachelor takes a young wife, what is he to expect? 'Tis now six months since Lady Teazle made me the happiest of men—and I have been the miserablest dog ever since that ever committed wedlock! We tift a little going to church, and came to a quarrel before the bells were done ringing. I was more than once

3. Suspect.

nearly choked with gall during the honeymoon, and had lost all comfort in life before my friends had done wishing me joy! Yet I chose with caution—a girl bred wholly in the country, who never knew luxury beyond one silk gown, nor dissipation above the annual gala of a race ball. Yet now she plays her part in all the extravagant fopperies of the fashion and the town, with as ready a grace as if she had never seen a bush nor a grass-plat out of Grosvenor Square! I am sneered at by my old acquaintance—paragraphed in the newspapers. She dissipates my fortune, and contradicts all my humours; yet the worst of it is, I doubt I love her, or I should never bear all this. However, I'll never be weak enough to own it.

Enter ROWLEY.

Rowley. Oh! Sir Peter, your servant—how is it with you, sir?

Sir Peter. Very bad, Master Rowley, very bad; I meet with nothing but crosses and vexations.

Rowley. What can have happened to trouble you since yesterday?

Sir Peter. A good question to a married man!

Rowley. Nay, I'm sure your lady, Sir Peter, can't be the cause of your uneasiness.

Sir Peter. Why, has anyone told you she was dead?

Rowley. Come, come, Sir Peter, you love her, notwithstanding your tempers don't exactly agree.

Sir Peter. But the fault is entirely hers, Master Rowley. I am, myself, the sweetest-tempered man alive, and hate a teasing temper—and so I tell her a hundred times a day.

Rowley. Indeed!

Sir Peter. Aye; and what is very extraordinary, in all our disputes she is always in the wrong! But Lady Sneerwell, and the set she meets at her house, encourage the perverseness of her disposition. Then, to complete my vexations, Maria, my ward, whom I ought to have the power of a father over, is determined to turn rebel too, and absolutely refuses the man whom I have long resolved on for her husband; meaning, I suppose, to bestow herself on his profligate brother.

Rowley. You know, Sir Peter, I have always taken the liberty to differ with you on the subject of these two young gentlemen. I only wish you may not be deceived in your opinion of the elder. For Charles, my life on't! he will retrieve his errors yet. Their worthy father, once my honoured master, was, at his years, nearly as wild a spark; yet,

when he died, he did not leave a more benevolent heart to lament his loss.

Sir Peter. You are wrong, Master Rowley. On their father's death, you know, I acted as a kind of guardian to them both, till their uncle Sir Oliver's Eastern liberality gave them an early independence; of course, no person could have more opportunities of judging of their hearts, and I was never mistaken in my life. Joseph is indeed a model for the young men of the age. He is a man of sentiment, and acts up to the sentiments he professes; but, for the other, take my word for't, if he had any grains of virtue by descent, he has dissipated them with the rest of his inheritance. Ah! my old friend, Sir Oliver, will be deeply mortified when he finds how part of his bounty has been misapplied.

Rowley. I am sorry to find you so violent against the young man, because this may be the most critical period of his fortune. I came hither with news that will surprise you.

Sir Peter. What! let me hear.

Rowley. Sir Oliver is arrived, and at this moment in town.

Sir Peter. How! you astonish me! I thought you did not expect him this month.

Rowley. I did not; but his passage has been remarkably quick.

Sir Peter. Egad, I shall rejoice to see my old friend—'tis sixteen years since we met—we have had many a day together; but does he still enjoin us not to inform his nephews of his arrival?

Rowley. Most strictly. He means, before it is known, to make some trial of their dispositions.

Sir Peter. Ah! There needs no art to discover their merits—however, he shall have his way; but, pray, does he know I am married?

Rowley. Yes, and will soon wish you joy.

Sir Peter. What, as we drink health to a friend in a consumption! Ah, Oliver will laugh at me—we used to rail at matrimony together—but he has been steady to his text. Well, he must be at my house, though—I'll instantly give orders for his reception. But, Master Rowley, don't drop a word that Lady Teazle and I ever disagree.

Rowley. By no means.

Sir Peter. For I should never be able to stand Noll's jokes; so I'd have him think, Lord forgive me! that we are a very happy couple.

Rowley. I understand you—but then you must be very careful not to differ while he's in the house with you.

Sir Peter. Egad, and so we must—and that's impossible. Ah! Master Rowley, when an old bachelor marries a young wife, he deserves—no—the crime carries the punishment along with it. (*Exeunt.*)

ACT II

SCENE I—SIR PETER TEAZLE's *house**Enter SIR PETER and LADY TEAZLE.*

Sir Peter. Lady Teazle, Lady Teazle, I'll not bear it!

Lady Teazle. Sir Peter, Sir Peter, you may bear it or not, as you please; but I ought to have my own way in everything, and what's more, I *will* too. What! though I was educated in the country, I know very well that women of fashion in London are accountable to nobody after they are married.

Sir Peter. Very well, ma'am, very well—so a husband is to have no influence, no authority?

Lady Teazle. Authority! No, to be sure—if you wanted authority over me, you should have adopted me, and not married me; I am sure you were old enough.

Sir Peter. Old enough!—aye, there it is! Well, well, Lady Teazle, though my life may be made unhappy by your temper, I'll not be ruined by your extravagance.

Lady Teazle. My extravagance! I'm sure I'm not more extravagant than a woman of fashion ought to be.

Sir Peter. No, no, madam, you shall throw away no more sums on such unmeaning luxury. 'Slife! to spend as much to furnish your dressing-room with flowers in winter as would suffice to turn the Pantheon⁴ into a greenhouse, and give a *fête-champêtre*⁵ at Christmas!

Lady Teazle. Lord, Sir Peter, am I to blame because flowers are dear in cold weather? You should find fault with the climate, and not with me. For my part, I am sure I wish it was spring all the year round, and that roses grew under one's feet!

Sir Peter. Oons! madam—if you had been born to this, I shouldn't wonder at your talking thus. But you forget what your situation was when I married you.

Lady Teazle. No, no, I don't; 'twas a very disagreeable one, or I should never have married *you*.

4. A fashionable concert-hall in Oxford Street.

5. An open-air festival.

Sir Peter. Yes, yes, madam, you were then in somewhat a humbler style—the daughter of a plain country squire. Recollect, Lady Teazle, when I saw you first, sitting at your tambour,⁶ in a pretty figured linen gown, with a bunch of keys by your side, your hair combed smooth over a roll, and your apartment hung round with fruits in worsted, of your own working.

Lady Teazle. O, yes! I remember it very well, and a curious life I led—my daily occupation to inspect the dairy, superintend the poultry, make extracts from the family receipt-book, and comb my aunt Deborah's lap-dog.

Sir Peter. Yes, yes, ma'am, 'twas so indeed.

Lady Teazle. And then, you know, my evening amusements! To draw patterns for ruffles, which I had not the materials to make; to play Pope Joan⁷ with the curate; to read a novel to my aunt; or to be stuck down to an old spinet to strum my father to sleep after a fox-chase.

Sir Peter. I am glad you have so good a memory. Yes, madam, these were the recreations I took you from; but now you must have your coach—*vis-à-vis*—and three powdered footmen before your chair and, in summer, a pair of white cats⁸ to draw you to Kensington Gardens. No recollection, I suppose, when you were content to ride double, behind the butler, on a docked coach-horse?

Lady Teazle. No—I swear I never did that—I deny the butler and the coach-horse.

Sir Peter. This, madam, was your situation—and what have I not done for you? I have made you a woman of fashion, of fortune, of rank—in short, I have made you my wife.

Lady Teazle. Well, then, and there is but one thing more you can make me to add to the obligation—and that is—

Sir Peter. My widow, I suppose?

Lady Teazle. Hem! hem!

Sir Peter. Thank you, madam—but don't flatter yourself; for though your ill conduct may disturb my peace, it shall never break my heart, I promise you: however, I am equally obliged to you for the hint.

Lady Teazle. Then why will you endeavour to make yourself so disagreeable to me, and thwart me in every little elegant expense?

6. Embroidery-frame.

7. An old-fashioned game of cards.

8. Ponies.

Sir Peter. 'Slife, madam, I say, had you any of these elegant expenses when you married me?

Lady Teazle. Lud, Sir Peter! would you have me be out of the fashion?

Sir Peter. The fashion, indeed! what had you to do with the fashion before you married me?

Lady Teazle. For my part, I should think you would like to have your wife thought a woman of taste.

Sir Peter. Aye—there again—taste! Zounds! madam, you had no taste when you married me!

Lady Teazle. That's very true, indeed, Sir Peter! and, *after* having married you, I am sure I should never pretend to taste again! But now, Sir Peter, if we have finished our daily jangle, I presume I may go to my engagement of [at] Lady Sneerwell's?

Sir Peter. Aye—there's another precious circumstance!—a charming set of acquaintances you have made there!

Lady Teazle. Nay, Sir Peter, they are people of rank and fortune, and remarkably tenacious of reputation.

Sir Peter. Yes, egad, they are tenacious of reputation with a vengeance; for they don't choose anybody should have a character but themselves! Such a crew! Ah! many a wretch has rid on a hurdle⁹ who has done less mischief than those utterers of forged tales, coiners of scandal—and clippers of reputation.

Lady Teazle. What! would you restrain the freedom of speech?

Sir Peter. Oh! they have made you just as bad as any one of the society.

Lady Teazle. Why, I believe I do bear a part with a tolerable grace. But I vow I have no malice against the people I abuse; when I say an ill-natured thing, 'tis out of pure good humour—and I take it for granted they deal exactly in the same manner with me. But, Sir Peter, you know you promised to come to Lady Sneerwell's too.

Sir Peter. Well, well, I'll call in just to look after my own character.

Lady Teazle. Then, indeed, you must make haste after me or you'll be too late. So good-bye to ye. (*Exit LADY TEAZLE.*)

Sir Peter. So—I have gained much by my intended expostulations! Yet with what a charming air she contradicts everything I say, and how pleasingly she shows her contempt of my authority! Well, though I

9. Rough cart on which criminals were taken to the place of execution. "Hurdles, with four, five, six wretches convicted of counterfeiting or mutilating the money of the realm, were dragged month after month up Holborn Hill."

can't make her love me, there is a great satisfaction in quarrelling with her; and I think she never appears to such advantage as when she's doing everything in her power to plague me. *(Exit.)*

SCENE II—LADY SNEERWELL'S

Lady Sneerwell. Nay, positively, we will hear it.

Joseph Surface. Yes, yes, the epigram, by all means.

Sir Benjamin. Plague on't, uncle! 'tis mere nonsense.

Crabtree. No, no; 'fore gad, very clever for an extempore!

Sir Benjamin. But, ladies, you should be acquainted with the circumstance—you must know, that one day last week, as Lady Betty Currie was taking the dust in Hyde Park, in a sort of *duodecimo*¹⁰ phaeton, she desired me to write some verses on her ponies; upon which, I took out my pocket-book, and in one moment produced the following:

Sure never were seen two such beautiful ponies!
Other horses are clowns, and these macaronies!
Nay, to give 'em this title I'm sure isn't wrong—
Their legs are so slim, and their tails are so long.

Crabtree. There, ladies—done in the smack of a whip, and on horseback too!

Joseph Surface. A very Phoebus, mounted—indeed, Sir Benjamin.

Sir Benjamin. O dear sir—trifles—trifles.

Enter LADY TEAZLE and MARIA.

Mrs. Candour. I must have a copy.

Lady Sneerwell. Lady Teazle, I hope we shall see Sir Peter.

Lady Teazle. I believe he'll wait on your ladyship presently.

Lady Sneerwell. Maria, my love, you look grave. Come, you shall sit down to cards with Mr. Surface.

Maria. I take very little pleasure in cards—however, I'll do as your ladyship pleases.

Lady Teazle (aside). I am surprised Mr. Surface should sit down with *her*. I thought he would have embraced this opportunity of speaking to me before Sir Peter came.

10. Diminutive.

Mrs. Candour. Now, I'll die but you are so scandalous, I'll forswear your society.

Lady Teazle. What's the matter, Mrs. Candour?

Mrs. Candour. They'll not allow our friend Miss Vermilion to be handsome.

Lady Sneerwell. Oh, surely, she's a pretty woman.

Crabtree. I am very glad you think so, ma'am.

Mrs. Candour. She has a charming fresh colour.

Lady Teazle. Yes, when it is fresh put on.

Mrs. Candour. O fie! I'll swear her colour is natural—I have seen it come and go.

Lady Teazle. I dare swear you have, ma'am—it goes of a night, and comes again in the morning.

Mrs. Candour. Ha! ha! ha! how I hate to hear you talk so! But surely, now, her sister *is*, or *was*, very handsome.

Crabtree. Who? Mrs. Evergreen?—O Lord! she's six-and-fifty if she's an hour!

Mrs. Candour. Now positively you wrong her; fifty-two or fifty-three is the utmost—and I don't think she looks more.

Sir Benjamin. Ah! there is no judging by her looks, unless one could see her face.

Lady Sneerwell. Well, well, if Mrs. Evergreen *does* take some pains to repair the ravages of time, you must allow she effects it with great ingenuity; and surely that's better than the careless manner in which the widow Ochre caulks her wrinkles.

Sir Benjamin. Nay, now, Lady Sneerwell, you are severe upon the widow. Come, come, it is not that she paints so ill—but, when she has finished her face, she joins it on so badly to her neck, that she looks like a mended statue, in which the connoisseur may see at once that the head's modern, though the trunk's antique!

Crabtree. Ha! ha! ha! Well said, nephew!

Mrs. Candour. Ha! ha! ha! Well, you make me laugh, but I vow I hate you for't. What do you think of Miss Simper?

Sir Benjamin. Why, she has very pretty teeth.

Lady Teazle. Yes; and on that account, when she is neither speaking nor laughing (which very seldom happens), she never absolutely shuts her mouth, but leaves it always on a jar, as it were.

Mrs. Candour. How can you be so ill-natured?

Lady Teazle. Nay, I allow even that's better than the pains Mrs. Prim takes to conceal her losses in front. She draws her mouth till it posi-

tively resembles the aperture of a poor's-box,¹¹ and all her words appear to slide out edgeways.

Lady Sneerwell. Very well, Lady Teazle; I see you can be a little severe.

Lady Teazle. In defence of a friend it is but justice—but here comes Sir Peter to spoil our pleasantry.

Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE.

Sir Peter. Ladies, your most obedient—Mercy on me, here is the whole set! a character dead at every word, I suppose. *(Aside.)*

Mrs. Candour. I am rejoiced you are come, Sir Peter. They have been *so* censorious. They will allow good qualities to nobody—not even good nature to our friend Mrs. Pursy.

Lady Teazle. What, the fat dowager who was at Mrs. Codille's last night?

Mrs. Candour. Nay, her bulk is her misfortune; and, when she takes such pains to get rid of it, you ought not to reflect on her.

Lady Sneerwell. That's very true, indeed.

Lady Teazle. Yes, I know she almost lives on acids and small whey; laces herself by pulleys; and often, in the hottest noon of summer, you may see her on a little squat pony, with her hair platted up behind like a drummer's, and puffing round the Ring¹² on a full trot.

Mrs. Candour. I thank you, Lady Teazle, for defending her.

Sir Peter. Yes, a good defence, truly.

Mrs. Candour. But Sir Benjamin is as censorious as Miss Sallow.

Crabtree. Yes, and she is a curious being to pretend to be censorious!—an awkward gawky, without any one good point under heaven.

Mrs. Candour. Positively you shall not be so very severe. Miss Sallow is a relation of mine by marriage, and, as for her person, great allowance is to be made; for, let me tell you, a woman labours under many disadvantages who tries to pass for a girl at six-and-thirty.

Lady Sneerwell. Though, surely, she is handsome still—and for the weakness in her eyes, considering how much she reads by candlelight, it is not to be wondered at.

Mrs. Candour. True; and then as to her manner, upon my word I think it is particularly graceful, considering she never had the least education; for you know her mother was a Welsh milliner, and her father a sugar-baker at Bristol.

Sir Benjamin. Ah! you are both of you too good-natured!

11. Referring to the narrow slit in the top of the church contribution-box for the poor of the parish.

12. The fashionable drive originally laid out in Hyde Park by Charles II.

Sir Peter. Yes, damned good-natured! This their own relation! mercy on me!
(Aside.)

Sir Benjamin. And Mrs. Candour is of so moral a turn she can sit for an hour to hear Lady Stucco talk sentiment.

Lady Teazle. Nay, I vow Lady Stucco is very well with the dessert after dinner; for she's just like the French fruit one cracks for mottoes—made up of paint and proverb.

Mrs. Candour. Well, I never will join in ridiculing a friend; and so I constantly tell my cousin Ogle, and you all know what pretensions she has to be critical in beauty.

Crabtree. Oh, to be sure! she has herself the oddest countenance that ever was seen; 'tis a collection of features from all the different countries of the globe.

Sir Benjamin. So she has, indeed—an Irish front!

Crabtree. Caledonian locks!

Sir Benjamin. Dutch nose!

Crabtree. Austrian lip!

Sir Benjamin. Complexion of a Spaniard!

Crabtree. And teeth *à la Chinoise!*

Sir Benjamin. In short, her face resembles a *table d'hôte* at Spa—where no two guests are of a nation—

Crabtree. Or a congress at the close of a general war—wherein all the members, even to her eyes, appear to have a different interest, and her nose and chin are the only parties likely to join issue.

Mrs. Candour. Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Peter. Mercy on my life!—a person they dine with twice a week!

(Aside.)

Lady Sneerwell. Go-go—you are a couple of provoking toads.

Mrs. Candour. Nay, but I vow you shall not carry the laugh off so—for give me leave to say, that Mrs. Ogle—

Sir Peter. Madam, madam, I beg your pardon—there's no stopping these good gentlemen's tongues. But when I tell *you*, Mrs. Candour, that the lady they are abusing is a particular friend of mine—I hope you'll not take her part.

Lady Sneerwell. Well said, Sir Peter! but you are a cruel creature—too phlegmatic yourself for a jest, and too peevish to allow wit on others.

Sir Peter. Ah, madam, true wit is more nearly allied to good nature than your ladyship is aware of.

Lady Teazle. True, Sir Peter; I believe they are so near akin that they can never be united.

Sir Benjamin. Or rather, madam, suppose them man and wife, because one so seldom sees them together.

Lady Teazle. But Sir Peter is such an enemy to scandal, I believe he would have it put down by parliament.

Sir Peter. 'Fore heaven, madam, if they were to consider the sporting with reputation of as much importance as poaching on manors, and pass *An Act for the Preservation of Fame*, I believe many would thank them for the bill.

Lady Sneerwell. O lud! Sir Peter; would you deprive us of our privileges?

Sir Peter. Aye, madam; and then no person should be permitted to kill characters or run down reputations, but qualified old maids and disappointed widows.

Lady Sneerwell. Go, you monster!

Mrs. Candour. But sure you would not be quite so severe on those who only report what they hear.

Sir Peter. Yes, madam, I would have law merchant¹³ for them too; and in all cases of slander currency, whenever the drawer of the lie was not to be found, the injured parties should have a right to come on any of the indorsers.

Crabtree. Well, for my part, I believe there never was a scandalous tale without some foundation.

Lady Sneerwell. Come, ladies, shall we sit down to cards in the next room?

Enter SERVANT and whispers SIR PETER.

Sir Peter. I'll be with them directly.—(*Exit SERVANT.*) I'll get away unperceived. *(Aside.)*

Lady Sneerwell. Sir Peter, you are not leaving us?

Sir Peter. Your ladyship must excuse me; I'm called away by particular business—but I leave my character behind me. *(Exit SIR PETER.)*

Sir Benjamin. Well certainly, Lady Teazle, that lord of yours is a strange being; I could tell you some stories of him would make you laugh heartily, if he wasn't your husband.

Lady Teazle. O pray don't mind that—come, do let's hear them.

They join the rest of the company, all talking as they are going into the next room.

Joseph Surface (*rising with MARIA*). Maria, I see you have no satisfaction in this society.

13. Mercantile law.

Maria. How is it possible I should? If to raise malicious smiles at the infirmities and misfortunes of those who have never injured us be the province of wit or humour, heaven grant me a double portion of dullness!

Joseph Surface. Yet they appear more ill-natured than they are; they have no malice at heart.

Maria. Then is their conduct still more contemptible; for, in my opinion, nothing could excuse the intemperance of their tongues but a natural and ungovernable bitterness of mind.

Joseph Surface. But can you, Maria, feel thus for others, and be unkind to me alone? Is hope to be denied the tenderest passion?

Maria. Why will you distress me by renewing this subject?

Joseph Surface. Ah, Maria! you would not treat me thus, and oppose your guardian, Sir Peter's will, but that I see that profligate Charles is still a favoured rival.

Maria. Ungenerously urged! But, whatever my sentiments of that unfortunate young man are, be assured I shall not feel more bound to give him up, because his distresses have lost him the regard even of a brother.

LADY TEAZLE *returns.*

Joseph Surface. Nay, but, Maria, do not leave me with a frown—by all that's honest, I swear—Gad's life, here's Lady Teazle— (*Aside.*) You must not—no, you shall not—for, though I have the greatest regard for Lady Teazle—

Maria. Lady Teazle!

Joseph Surface. Yet were Sir Peter to suspect—

Lady Teazle (*coming forward.*) What's this, pray? Do you take her for me?—Child, you are wanted in the next room.— (*Exit MARIA.*) What is all this, pray?

Joseph Surface. Oh, the most unlucky circumstance in nature! Maria has somehow suspected the tender concern I have for your happiness, and threatened to acquaint Sir Peter with her suspicions, and I was just endeavouring to reason with her when you came.

Lady Teazle. Indeed! but you seemed to adopt a very tender mode of reasoning—do you *usually* argue on your knees?

Joseph Surface. Oh, she's a child—and I thought a little bombast—but, Lady Teazle, when are you to give me your judgment on my library, as you promised?

Lady Teazle. No, no, I begin to think it would be imprudent, and you know I admit you as a lover no further than *fashion* requires.

Joseph Surface. True—a mere Platonic cicisbeo,¹⁴ what every London wife is entitled to.

Lady Teazle. Certainly, one must not be out of the fashion; however, I have so many of my country prejudices left, that, though Sir Peter's ill humour may vex me ever so, it never shall provoke me to—

Joseph Surface. The only revenge in your power. Well, I applaud your moderation.

Lady Teazle. Go—you are an insinuating wretch! But we shall be missed—let us join the company.

Joseph Surface. But we had best not return together.

Lady Teazle. Well, don't stay—for Maria shan't come to hear any more of your reasoning, I promise you. *(Exit LADY TEAZLE.)*

Joseph Surface. A curious dilemma, truly, my politics have run me into! I wanted, at first, only to ingratiate myself with Lady Teazle, that she might not be my enemy with Maria; and I have, I don't know how, become her serious lover. Sincerely I begin to wish I had never made such a point of gaining so *very good* a character, for it has led me into so many cursed rogueries that I doubt I shall be exposed at last.

(Exit.)

SCENE III—SIR PETER'S

Enter SIR OLIVER SURFACE and ROWLEY

Sir Oliver. Ha! ha! ha! and so my old friend is married, hey?—a young wife out of the country. Ha! ha! ha!—that he should have stood bluff¹⁵ to old bachelor so long, and sink into a husband at last!

Rowley. But you must not rally him on the subject, Sir Oliver; 'tis a tender point, I assure you, though he has been married only seven months.

Sir Oliver. Then he has been just half a year on the stool of repentance! Poor Peter! But you say he has entirely given up Charles—never sees him, hey?

Rowley. His prejudice against him is astonishing, and I am sure greatly increased by a jealousy of him with Lady Teazle, which he has been industriously led into by a scandalous society in the neighbourhood, who have contributed not a little to Charles's ill name; whereas the

14. Gallant to a married woman.

15. Steadfast.

truth is, I believe, if the lady is partial to either of them, his brother is the favorite.

Sir Oliver. Aye, I know there are a set of malicious, prating, prudent gossips, both male and female, who murder characters to kill time, and will rob a young fellow of his good name before he has years to know the value of it—but I am not to be prejudiced against my nephew by such, I promise you! No, no; if Charles has done nothing false or mean, I shall compound for his extravagance.

Rowley. Then, my life on't, you will reclaim him. Ah, sir, it gives me new life to find that *your* heart is not turned against him, and that the son of my good old master has one friend, however, left.

Sir Oliver. What! shall I forget, Master Rowley, when I was at his years myself? Egad, my brother and I were neither of us very *prudent* youths—and yet, I believe, you have not seen many better men than your old master was?

Rowley. Sir, 'tis this reflection gives me assurance that Charles may yet be a credit to his family. But here comes Sir Peter.

Sir Oliver. Egad, so he does! Mercy on me, he's greatly altered, and seems to have a settled married look! One may read husband in his face at this distance!

Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE.

Sir Peter. Hah! Sir Oliver—my old friend! Welcome to England a thousand times!

Sir Oliver. Thank you, thank you, Sir Peter! and i'faith I am glad to find you well, believe me!

Sir Peter. Ah! 'tis a long time since we met—sixteen years, I doubt, Sir Oliver, and many a cross accident in the time.

Sir Oliver. Aye, I have had my share—but, what! I find you are married, hey, my old boy? Well, well, it can't be helped—and so I wish you joy with all my heart!

Sir Peter. Thank you, thank you, Sir Oliver. Yes, I have entered into the happy state—but we'll not talk of that now.

Sir Oliver. True, true, Sir Peter; old friends should not begin on grievances at first meeting. No, no, no.

Rowley (*to SIR OLIVER*). Take care, pray, sir.

Sir Oliver. Well, so one of my nephews is a wild rogue, hey?

Sir Peter. Wild! Ah! my old friend, I grieve for your disappointment there—he's a lost young man, indeed; however, his brother will make you

amends; Joseph is, indeed, what a youth should be—everybody in the world speaks well of him.

Sir Oliver. I am sorry to hear it—he has too good a character to be an honest fellow. Everybody speaks well of him! Psha! then he has bowed as low to knaves and fools as to the honest dignity of genius or virtue.

Sir Peter. What, Sir Oliver! do you blame him for not making enemies?

Sir Oliver. Yes, if he has merit enough to deserve them.

Sir Peter. Well, well—you'll be convinced when you know him. 'Tis edification to hear him converse—he professes the noblest sentiments.

Sir Oliver. Ah, plague of his sentiments! If he salutes me with a scrap of morality in his mouth, I shall be sick directly. But, however, don't mistake me, Sir Peter; I don't mean to defend Charles's errors—but, before I form my judgment of either of them, I intend to make a trial of their hearts—and my friend Rowley and I have planned something for the purpose.

Rowley. And Sir Peter shall own for once he has been mistaken.

Sir Peter. Oh, my life on Joseph's honour!

Sir Oliver. Well, come, give us a bottle of good wine, and we'll drink the lad's health, and tell you our scheme.

Sir Peter. Allons, then!

Sir Oliver. And don't, Sir Peter, be so severe against your old friend's son. Odds my life! I am not sorry that he has run out of the course a little; for my part, I hate to see prudence clinging to the green succours of youth; 'tis like ivy round a sapling, and spoils the growth of the tree. *(Exeunt.)*

ACT III

SCENE I—SIR PETER'S

Sir Peter. Well, then—we will see this fellow first, and have our wine afterwards. But how is this, Master Rowley? I don't see the jet¹⁶ of your scheme.

Rowley. Why, sir, this Mr. Stanley, whom I was speaking of, is nearly related to them, by their mother; he was once a merchant in Dublin, but has been ruined by a series of undeserved misfortunes. He has

16. Point, gist.

applied, by letter, since his confinement, both to Mr. Surface and Charles—from the former he has received nothing but evasive promises of future service, while Charles has done all that his extravagance has left him power to do; and he is, at this time, endeavouring to raise a sum of money, part of which, in the midst of his own distresses, I know he intends for the service of poor Stanley.

Sir Oliver. Ah! he is my brother's son.

Sir Peter. Well, but how is Sir Oliver personally to—

Rowley. Why, sir, I will inform Charles and his brother that Stanley has obtained permission to apply in person to his friends, and, as they have neither of them ever seen him, let Sir Oliver assume his character, and he will have a fair opportunity of judging at least of the benevolence of their dispositions; and believe me, sir, you will find in the youngest brother one who, in the midst of folly and dissipation, has still, as our immortal bard expresses it—

a tear for pity, and a hand
Open as day, for melting charity.¹⁷

Sir Peter. Psha! What signifies his having an open hand or purse either, when he has nothing left to give? Well, well, make the trial, if you please; but where is the fellow whom you brought for Sir Oliver to examine, relative to Charles's affairs?

Rowley. Below, waiting his commands, and no one can give him better intelligence. This, Sir Oliver, is a friendly Jew, who, to do him justice, has done everything in his power to bring your nephew to a proper sense of his extravagance.

Sir Peter. Pray let us have him in.

Rowley. Desire Mr. Moses to walk upstairs.

Sir Peter. But why should you suppose he will speak the truth?

Rowley. Oh, I have convinced him that he has no chance of recovering certain sums advanced to Charles but through the bounty of Sir Oliver, who he knows is arrived; so that you may depend on his fidelity to his [own] interest. I have also another evidence in my power, one Snake, whom I have detected in a matter little short of forgery, and shall shortly produce to remove some of *your* prejudices, Sir Peter, relative to Charles and Lady Teazle.

Sir Peter. I have heard too much on that subject.

17. See *Great Books of the Western World*.

Rowley. Here comes the honest Israelite.

Enter MOSES.

—This is Sir Oliver.

Sir Oliver. Sir, I understand you have lately had great dealings with my nephew Charles.

Moses. Yes, Sir Oliver—I have done all I could for him, but he was ruined before he came to me for assistance.

Sir Oliver. That was unlucky, truly—for you have had no opportunity of showing your talents.

Moses. None at all—I hadn't the pleasure of knowing his distresses—till he was some thousands worse than nothing.

Sir Oliver. Unfortunate, indeed! But I suppose you have done all in your power for him, honest Moses?

Moses. Yes, he knows that. This very evening I was to have brought him a gentleman from the city, who doesn't know him, and will, I believe, advance him some money.

Sir Peter. What, one Charles has never had money from before?

Moses. Yes; Mr. Premium, of Crutched Friars¹⁸—formerly a broker.

Sir Peter. Egad, Sir Oliver, a thought strikes me!—Charles, you say, doesn't know Mr. Premium?

Moses. Not at all.

Sir Peter. Now then, Sir Oliver, you may have a better opportunity of satisfying yourself than by an old romancing tale of a poor relation; go with my friend Moses, and represent Mr. Premium, and then, I'll answer for't, you will see your nephew in all his glory.

Sir Oliver. Egad, I like this idea better than the other, and I may visit Joseph afterwards, as old Stanley.

Sir Peter. True—so you may.

Rowley. Well, this is taking Charles rather at a disadvantage, to be sure. However, Moses—you understand Sir Peter, and will be faithful?

Moses. You may depend upon me—this is near the time I was to have gone.

Sir Oliver. I'll accompany you as soon as you please, Moses; but hold! I have forgot one thing—how the plague shall I be able to pass for a Jew?

Moses. There's no need—the principal is Christian.

18. A street, not far from the Tower of London, named from an old Convent of Crossed or Crouched Friars.

Sir Oliver. Is he?—I'm sorry to hear it—but, then again, an't I rather too smartly dressed to look like a money-lender?

Sir Peter. Not at all; 'twould not be out of character, if you went in your own carriage—would it, Moses?

Moses. Not in the least.

Sir Oliver. Well, but how must I talk? there's certainly some cant of usury, and mode of treating, that I ought to know.

Sir Peter. Oh, there's not much to learn—the great point, as I take it, is to be exorbitant enough in your demands—hey, Moses?

Moses. Yes, that's a very great point.

Sir Oliver. I'll answer for't I'll not be wanting in that. I'll ask him eight or ten per cent on the loan, at least.

Moses. If you ask him no more than that, you'll be discovered immediately.

Sir Oliver. Hey! what the plague! how much then?

Moses. That depends upon the circumstances. If he appears not very anxious for the supply, you should require only forty or fifty per cent; but if you find him in great distress, and want the moneys very bad—you may ask double.

Sir Peter. A good honest trade you're learning, Sir Oliver!

Sir Oliver. Truly I think so—and not unprofitable.

Moses. Then, you know, you haven't the moneys yourself, but are forced to borrow them for him of a friend.

Sir Oliver. Oh! I borrow it of a friend, do I?

Moses. Yes, and your friend is an unconscionable dog, but you can't help it.

Sir Oliver. My friend is an unconscionable dog, is he?

Moses. Yes, and he himself has not the moneys by him—but is forced to sell stock at a great loss.

Sir Oliver. He is forced to sell stock, is he, at a great loss, is he? Well, that's very kind of him.

Sir Peter. I'faith, Sir Oliver—Mr. Premium, I mean—you'll soon be master of the trade. But, Moses! wouldn't you have him run out a little against the Annuity Bill?¹⁹ That would be in character, I should think.

Moses. Very much.

Rowley. And lament that a young man now must be at years of discretion before he is suffered to ruin himself?

19. The Annuity Bill, presented in the House of Commons, April 29, 1777, and passed in May (after the first performance of *The S. for S.*) was aimed to safeguard minors against grantors of life annuities.

Moses. Aye, great pity!

Sir Peter. And abuse the public for allowing merit to an act whose only object is to snatch misfortune and imprudence from the rapacious relief of usury, and give the minor a chance of inheriting his estate without being undone by coming into possession.

Sir Oliver. So, so—*Moses* shall give me further instructions as we go together.

Sir Peter. You will not have much time, for your nephew lives hard by.

Sir Oliver. Oh, never fear! my tutor appears so able, that though Charles lived in the next street, it must be my own fault if I am not a complete rogue before I turn the corner.

(*Exeunt SIR OLIVER and MOSES.*)

Sir Peter. So now I think Sir Oliver will be convinced; you are partial, Rowley, and would have prepared Charles for the other plot.

Rowley. No, upon my word, Sir Peter.

Sir Peter. Well, go bring me this Snake, and I'll hear what he has to say presently. I see Maria, and want to speak with her. (*Exit ROWLEY.*) I should be glad to be convinced my suspicions of Lady Teazle and Charles were unjust. I have never yet opened my mind on this subject to my friend Joseph—I'm determined I will do it—he will give me his opinion sincerely.

Enter MARIA.

So, child, has Mr. Surface returned with you?

Maria. No, sir—he was engaged.

Sir Peter. Well, Maria, do you not reflect, the more you converse with that amiable young man, what return his partiality for you deserves?

Maria. Indeed, Sir Peter, your frequent importunity on this subject distresses me extremely—you compel me to declare, that I know no man who has ever paid me a particular attention whom I would not prefer to Mr. Surface.

Sir Peter. So—here's perverseness! No, no, Maria, 'tis Charles only whom you would prefer—'tis evident his vices and follies have won your heart.

Maria. This is unkind, sir—you know I have obeyed you in neither seeing nor corresponding with him; I have heard enough to convince me that he is unworthy my regard. Yet I cannot think it culpable, if, while my understanding severely condemns his vices, my heart suggests some pity for his distresses.

Sir Peter. Well, well, pity him as much as you please, but give your heart and hand to a worthier object.

Maria. Never to his brother!

Sir Peter. Go, perverse and obstinate! But take care, madam; you have never yet known what the authority of a guardian is—don't compel me to inform you of it.

Maria. I can only say, you shall not have *just* reason. 'Tis true, by my father's will, I am for a short period bound to regard you as his substitute, but must cease to think you so, when you would compel me to be miserable.

(*Exit MARIA.*)

Sir Peter. Was ever man so crossed as I am! everything conspiring to fret me! I had not been involved in matrimony a fortnight, before her father, a hale and hearty man, died—on purpose, I believe, for the pleasure of plaguing me with the care of his daughter. But here comes my helpmate! She appears in great good humour. How happy I should be if I could tease her into loving me, though but a little!

Enter LADY TEAZLE.

Lady Teazle. Lud! Sir Peter, I hope you haven't been quarrelling with Maria—it isn't using me well to be ill humoured when I am not by.

Sir Peter. Ah, Lady Teazle, you might have the power to make me good humoured at all times.

Lady Teazle. I am sure I wish I had—for I want you to be in charming sweet temper at this moment. Do be good humoured now, and let me have two hundred pounds, will you?

Sir Peter. Two hundred pounds! what, an't I to be in a good humour without payng for it! But speak to me thus, and i'faith there's nothing I could refuse you. You shall have it; but seal me a bond for the repayment.

Lady Teazle. O, no—there—my note of hand will do as well.

Sir Peter (*kissing her hand*). And you shall no longer reproach me with not giving you an independent settlement—I mean shortly to surprise you; but shall we always live thus, hey?

Lady Teazle. If you please. I'm sure I don't care how soon we leave off quarrelling, provided you'll own *you* were tired first.

Sir Peter. Well—then let our future contest be, who shall be most obliging.

Lady Teazle. I assure you, Sir Peter, good nature becomes you. You look now as you did before we were married!—when you used to walk with me under the elms, and tell me stories of what a gallant you were in your youth, and chuck me under the chin, you would, and

ask me if I thought I could love an old fellow, who would deny me nothing—didn't you?

Sir Peter. Yes, yes, and you were as kind and attentive.

Lady Teazle. Aye, so I was, and would always take your part, when my acquaintance used to abuse you, and turn you into ridicule.

Sir Peter. Indeed!

Lady Teazle. Aye, and when my cousin Sophy has called you a stiff, peevish old bachelor, and laughed at me for thinking of marrying one who might be my father, I have always defended you—and said, I didn't think you so ugly by any means, and that I dared say you'd make a very good sort of a husband.

Sir Peter. And you prophesied right—and we shall certainly now be the happiest couple—

Lady Teazle. And never differ again!

Sir Peter. No, never!—though at the same time, indeed, my dear Lady Teazle, you must watch your temper very narrowly; for in all our little quarrels, my dear, if you recollect, my love, you always began first.

Lady Teazle. I beg your pardon, my dear Sir Peter: indeed, you always gave the provocation.

Sir Peter. Now, see, my angel! take care—*contradicting* isn't the way to keep friends.

Lady Teazle. Then, don't *you* begin it, my love!

Sir Peter. There, now! you—you are going on—you don't perceive, my life, that you are just doing the very thing which you know always makes me angry.

Lady Teazle. Nay, you know if you will be angry without any reason—

Sir Peter. There now! you want to quarrel again.

Lady Teazle. No, I am sure I don't—but, if you will be so peevish—

Sir Peter. There now! who begins first?

Lady Teazle. Why, you, to be sure. I said nothing—but there's no bearing your temper.

Sir Peter. No, no, madam, the fault's in your own temper.

Lady Teazle. Aye, you are just what my cousin Sophy said you would be.

Sir Peter. Your cousin Sophy is a forward, impertinent gipsy.

Lady Teazle. You are a great bear, I'm sure, to abuse my relations.

Sir Peter. Now may all the plagues of marriage be doubled on me, if ever I try to be friends with you any more!

Lady Teazle. So much the better.

Sir Peter. No, no, madam; 'tis evident you never cared a pin for me, and

I was a madman to marry you—a pert, rural coquette, that had refused half the honest squires in the neighbourhood!

Lady Teazle. And I am sure I was a fool to marry you—an old dangling bachelor, who was single at fifty, only because he never could meet with any one who would have him.

Sir Peter. Aye, aye, madam; but you were pleased enough to listen to me—you never had such an offer before.

Lady Teazle. No! didn't I refuse Sir Twivy Tarrier, who everybody said would have been a better match—for his estate is just as good as yours—and he has broke his neck since we have been married.

Sir Peter. I have done with you, madam! You are an unfeeling, ungrateful—but there's an end of everything. I believe you capable of anything that's bad. Yes, madam, I now believe the reports relative to you and Charles, madam—yes, madam, you and Charles—are not without grounds—

Lady Teazle. Take care, Sir Peter! you had better not insinuate any such thing! I'll not be suspected without cause, I promise you.

Sir Peter. Very well, madam! very well! a separate maintenance as soon as you please. Yes, madam, or a divorce! I'll make an example of myself for the benefit of all old bachelors. Let us separate, madam.

Lady Teazle. Agreed! agreed! And now, my dear Sir Peter, we are of a mind once more, we may be the *happiest couple*, and *never differ again*, you know: ha! ha! Well, you are going to be in a passion, I see, and I shall only interrupt you—so, bye-bye! (*Exit.*)

Sir Peter. Plagues and tortures! can't I make her angry neither? Oh, I am the miserablest fellow! But I'll not bear her presuming to keep her temper—no! she may break my heart, but she shan't keep her temper. (*Exit.*)

SCENE II—CHARLES'S house

Enter TRIP, MOSES, and SIR OLIVER SURFACE.

Trip. Here, Master Moses! if you'll stay a moment, I'll try whether—what's the gentleman's name?

Sir Oliver. Mr. Moses, what is my name? (*Aside.*)

Moses. Mr. Premium.

Trip. Premium—very well. (*Exit TRIP, taking snuff.*)

Sir Oliver. To judge by the servants, one wouldn't believe the master was ruined. But what!—sure, this was my brother's house?

Moses. Yes, sir; Mr. Charles bought it of Mr. Joseph, with the furniture,

pictures, etc., just as the old gentleman left it—Sir Peter thought it a great piece of extravagance in him.

Sir Oliver. In my mind, the other's economy in *selling* it to him was more reprehensible by half.

Re-enter TRIP.

Trip. My master says you must wait, gentlemen; he has company, and can't speak with you yet.

Sir Oliver. If he knew *who* it was wanted to see him, perhaps he wouldn't have sent such a message?

Trip. Yes, yes, sir; he knows *you* are here—I didn't forget little Premium—no, no, no.

Sir Oliver. Very well—and I pray, sir, what may be your name?

Trip. Trip, sir—my name is Trip, at your service.

Sir Oliver. Well, then, Mr. Trip, you have a pleasant sort of a place here, I guess.

Trip. Why, yes—here are three or four of us pass our time agreeably enough; but then our wages are sometimes a little in arrear—and not very great either—but fifty pounds a year, and find our own bags and bouquets.²⁰

Sir Oliver (aside). Bags and bouquets! halters and bastinadoes!

Trip. But à propos, Moses, have you been able to get me that little bill discounted?

Sir Oliver (aside). Wants to raise money, too!—mercy on me! Has his distresses, I warrant, like a lord and affects creditors and duns.

Moses. 'Twas not to be done, indeed, Mr. Trip. (Gives the note.)

Trip. Good lack, you surprise me! My friend *Brush* has indorsed it, and I thought when he put his mark on the back of a bill 'twas as good as cash.

Moses. No, 'twouldn't do.

Trip. A small sum—but twenty pounds. Hark'ee, Moses, do you think you couldn't get it me by way of annuity?

Sir Oliver (aside). An annuity! ha! ha! ha! a footman raise money by way of annuity! Well done, luxury, egad!

Moses. But you must insure your place.

Trip. Oh, with all my heart! I'll insure my place, and my life too, if you please.

20. Footman's trappings. The back-hair of the bag-wig was enclosed in an ornamental bag.

Sir Oliver (aside). It's more than I would your neck.

Trip. But then, Moses, it must be done before this d-d register²¹ takes place—one wouldn't like to have one's name made public, you know.

Moses. No, certainly. But is there nothing you could deposit?

Trip. Why, nothing capital of my master's wardrobe has dropped lately; but I could give you a mortgage on some of his winter clothes, with equity of redemption before November—or you shall have the reversion of the French velvet, or a post-obit²² on the blue and silver; these, I should think, Moses, with a few pair of point ruffles, as a collateral security—hey, my little fellow?

Moses. Well, well.

(*Bell rings.*)

Trip. Gad, I heard the bell! I believe, gentlemen, I can now introduce you.

Don't forget the annuity, little Moses! This way, gentlemen, insure my place, you know.

Sir Oliver (aside). If the man be a shadow of his master, this is the temple of dissipation indeed!

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III—CHARLES SURFACE, CARELESS, ETC., ETC.,
at a table with wine, etc.

Charles Surface. 'Fore heaven, 'tis true!—there's the great degeneracy of the age. Many of our acquaintance have taste, spirit, and politeness; but, plague on't, they won't drink.

Careless. It is so, indeed, Charles! they give in to all the substantial luxuries of the table, and abstain from nothing but wine and wit.

Charles Surface. Oh, certainly society suffers by it intolerably! for now, instead of the social spirit of railly that used to mantle over a glass of bright Burgundy, their conversation is become just like the Spawater they drink, which has all the pertness and flatulence of champagne, without its spirit or flavour.

First Gentleman. But what are *they* to do who love play better than wine?

Careless. True! there's Harry diets himself for gaming, and is now under a hazard regimen.²³

Charles Surface. Then he'll have the worst of it. What! you wouldn't train a horse for the course by keeping him from corn! For my part, egad,

21. Another reference to the Annuity Bill of 1777, proposed on April 29, and passed in May. It provided "for registering the Grants of Life Annuities."

22. Future claim.

23. "Keeps in strict training for gambling."

I am now never so successful as when I am a little merry—let me throw on a bottle of champagne, and I never lose—at least I never feel my losses, which is exactly the same thing.

Second Gentleman. Aye, that I believe.

Charles Surface. And, then, what man can pretend to be a believer in love, who is an abjurer of wine? 'Tis the test by which the lover knows his own heart. Fill a dozen bumpers to a dozen beauties, and she that floats at top is the maid that has bewitched you.

Careless. Now then, Charles, be honest, and give us your real favourite.

Charles Surface. Why, I have withheld her only in compassion to you. If I toast her, you must give a round of her peers—which is impossible—on earth.

Careless. Oh, then we'll find some canonized vestals or heathen goddesses that will do, I warrant!

Charles Surface. Here then, bumpers, you rogues! bumpers! Maria!
Maria—
(*Drink.*)

First Gentleman. Maria who?

Charles Surface. O, damn the surname!—'tis too formal to be registered in Love's calendar—but now, Sir Toby Bumper, beware—we must have beauty superlative.

Careless. Nay, never study, Sir Toby: we'll stand to the toast, though your mistress should want an eye—and you know you have a song will excuse you.

Sir Toby. Egad, so I have! and I'll give him the song instead of the lady.
(*Sings.*)

SONG AND CHORUS

Here's to the maiden of bashful fifteen;
Here's to the widow of fifty;
Here's to the flaunting extravagant quean,
And here's to the housewife that's thrifty.

Chorus. Let the toast pass—
Drink to the lass—
I'll warrant she'll prove an excuse for the glass.

Here's to the charmer whose dimples we prize;
Now to the maid who has none, sir;
Here's to the girl with a pair of blue eyes,
And here's to the nymph with but one, sir.

Chorus. Let the toast pass, etc.

Here's to the maid with a bosom of snow:
 Now to *her* that's as brown as a berry:
 Here's to the wife with a face full of woe,
 And now for the damsels that's merry.

Chorus. Let the toast pass, etc.

For let 'em be clumsy, or let 'em be slim,
 Young or ancient, I care not a feather:
 So fill a pint bumper quite up to the brim,
 —And let us e'en toast 'em together.

Chorus. Let the toast pass, etc.

All. Bravo! Bravo!

Enter TRIP, and whispers CHARLES SURFACE.

Charles Surface. Gentlemen, you must excuse me a little.—Careless, take the chair, will you?

Careless. Nay, prithee, Charles, what now? This is one of your peerless beauties, I suppose, has dropped in by chance?

Charles Surface. No, faith! To tell you the truth, 'tis a Jew and a broker, who are come by appointment.

Careless. Oh, damn it! let's have the Jew in—

First Gentleman. Aye, and the broker too, by all means.

Second Gentleman. Yes, yes, the Jew and the broker.

Charles Surface. Egad, with all my heart!—Trip, bid the gentlemen walk in. *(Exit TRIP.)*

Though there's one of them a stranger, I can tell you.

Careless. Charles, let us give them some generous Burgundy, and perhaps they'll grow conscientious.

Charles Surface. Oh, hang 'em, no! wine does but draw forth a man's *natural* qualities; and to make *them* drink would only be to whet their knavery.

Enter TRIP, SIR OLIVER SURFACE, and MOSES.

Charles Surface. So, honest Moses; walk in, pray, Mr. Premium—that's the gentleman's name, isn't it, Moses?

Moses. Yes, sir.

Charles Surface. Set chairs, Trip.—Sit down, Mr. Premium.—Glasses, Trip.—Sit down, Moses.—Come, Mr. Premium, I'll give you a sentiment; here's "Success to usury!"—Moses, fill the gentleman a bumper.

Moses. Success to usury!

Careless. Right, Moses—usury is prudence and industry, and deserves to succeed.

Sir Oliver. Then here's—All the success it deserves!

Careless. No, no, that won't do! Mr. Premium, you have demurred to the toast, and must drink it in a pint bumper.

First Gentleman. A pint bumper, at least.

Moses. Oh, pray, sir, consider—Mr. Premium's a gentleman.

Careless. And therefore loves good wine.

Second Gentleman. Give Moses a quart glass—this is mutiny, and a high contempt of the chair.

Careless. Here, now for't! I'll see justice done, to the last drop of my bottle.

Sir Oliver. Nay, pray, gentlemen—I did not expect this usage.

Charles Surface. No, hang it, Careless, you shan't; Mr. Premium's a stranger.

Sir Oliver (aside). Odd! I wish I was well out of this company.

Careless. Plague on 'em then! if they won't drink, well not sit down with 'em. Come, Harry, the dice are in the next room.—Charles, you'll join us—when you have finished your business with these gentlemen?

Charles Surface. I will! I will!

(*Exeunt Gentlemen.*)

Careless!

Careless (returning). Well!

Charles Surface. Perhaps I may want *you*.

Careless. Oh, you know I am always ready—word, note, or bond, 'tis all the same to me.

(*Exit.*)

Moses. Sir, this is Mr. Premium, a gentleman of the strictest honour and secrecy; and always performs what he undertakes. Mr. Premium, this is—

Charles Surface. Pshaw! have done! Sir, my friend Moses is a very honest fellow, but a little slow at expression; he'll be an hour giving us our titles. Mr. Premium, the plain state of the matter is this—I am an extravagant young fellow who wants money to borrow; you I take to be a prudent old fellow, who has got money to lend. I am blockhead enough to give fifty per cent sooner than not have it; and you, I presume, are rogue enough to take a hundred if you could get it. Now, sir, you see we are acquainted at once, and may proceed to business without farther ceremony.

Sir Oliver. Exceeding frank, upon my word. I see, sir, you are not a man of many compliments.

Charles Surface. Oh, no, sir! plain dealing in business I always think best.

Sir Oliver. Sir, I like you the better for't. However, you are mistaken in one thing—I have no money to lend, but I believe I could procure some of a friend; but then he's an unconscionable dog—isn't he, Moses? And must sell stock to accommodate you—mustn't he, Moses?

Moses. Yes, indeed! You know I always speak the truth, and scorn to tell a lie!

Charles Surface. Right! People that expect truth generally do. But these are trifles, Mr. Premium. What! I know money isn't to be bought without paying for't!

Sir Oliver. Well, but what security could you give? You have no land, I suppose?

Charles Surface. Not a mole-hill, not a twig, but what's in beau-pots²⁴ out at the window!

Sir Oliver. Nor any stock, I presume?

Charles Surface. Nothing but live stock—and that's only a few pointers and ponies. But pray, Mr. Premium, are you acquainted at all with any of my connections?

Sir Oliver. Why, to say truth, I am.

Charles Surface. Then you must know that I have a devilish rich uncle in the East Indies, *Sir Oliver Surface*, from whom I have the greatest expectations.

Sir Oliver. That you have a wealthy uncle, I have heard—but how your expectations will turn out is more, I believe, than you can tell.

Charles Surface. Oh, no!—there can be no doubt—they tell me I'm a prodigious favourite—and that he talks of leaving me everything.

Sir Oliver. Indeed! this is the first I've heard on't.

Charles Surface. Yes, yes, 'tis just so. Moses knows 'tis true; don't you, Moses?

Moses. Oh, yes! I'll swear to't.

Sir Oliver (aside). Egad, they'll persuade me presently I'm at Bengal.

Charles Surface. Now I propose, Mr. Premium, if it's agreeable to you, a post-obit on Sir Oliver's life; though at the same time the old fellow has been so liberal to me that I give you my word I should be very sorry to hear anything had happened to him.

Sir Oliver. Not more than I should, I assure you. But the bond you mention happens to be just the worst security you could offer me—for I might live to a hundred and never recover the principal.

24. Large ornamental flower-pots.

Charles Surface. Oh, yes, you would!—the moment Sir Oliver dies, you know, you'd come on me for the money.

Sir Oliver. Then I believe I should be the most unwelcome dun you ever had in your life.

Charles Surface. What! I suppose you are afraid now that Sir Oliver is too good a life?

Sir Oliver. No, indeed I am not—though I have heard he is as hale and healthy as any man of his years in Christendom.

Charles Surface. There again you are misinformed. No, no, the climate has hurt him considerably, poor uncle Oliver. Yes, he breaks apace, I'm told—and so much altered lately that his nearest relations don't know him.

Sir Oliver. No! Ha! ha! ha! so much altered lately that his relations don't know him! Ha! ha! ha! that's droll, egad—ha! ha! ha!

Charles Surface. Ha! ha!—you're glad to hear that, little Premium.

Sir Oliver. No, no, I'm not.

Charles Surface. Yes, yes, you are—ha! ha! ha!—you know that mends your chance.

Sir Oliver. But I'm told Sir Oliver is coming over—nay, some say he is actually arrived.

Charles Surface. Pshaw! sure I must know better than you whether he's come or not. No, no, rely on't, he is at this moment at Calcutta, isn't he, Moses?

Moses. Oh, yes, certainly.

Sir Oliver. Very true, as you say, you must know better than I, though I have it from pretty good authority—haven't I, Moses?

Moses. Yes, most undoubted!

Sir Oliver. But, sir, as I understand you want a few hundreds immediately, is there nothing you would dispose of?

Charles Surface. How do you mean?

Sir Oliver. For instance, now—I have heard—that your father left behind him a great quantity of massy old plate.

Charles Surface. O lud! that's gone long ago—Moses can tell you how better than I can.

Sir Oliver. Good lack! all the family race-cups and corporation-bowls! (*Aside.*)—Then it was also supposed that his library was one of the most valuable and complete.

Charles Surface. Yes, yes, so it was—vastly too much so for a private gentleman—for my part, I was always of a communicative disposition, so I thought it a shame to keep so much knowledge to myself.

Sir Oliver (aside). Mercy on me! learning that had run in the family like an heirloom!—(*Aloud.*) Pray, what are become of the books?

Charles Surface. You must inquire of the auctioneer, Master Premium, for I don't believe even Moses can direct you there.

Moses. I never meddle with books.

Sir Oliver. So, so, nothing of the family property left, I suppose?

Charles Surface. Not much, indeed; unless you have a mind to the family pictures. I have got a room full of ancestors above—and if you have a taste for old paintings, egad, you shall have 'em a bargain!

Sir Oliver. Hey! and the devil! sure, you wouldn't sell your forefathers, would you?

Charles Surface. Every man of 'em, to the best bidder.

Sir Oliver. What! your great-uncles and aunts?

Charles Surface. Aye, and my great-grandfathers and grandmothers too.

Sir Oliver. Now I give him up! (*Aside.*)—What the plague, have you no bowels for your own kindred? Odd's life! do you take me for Shylock in the play, that you would raise money of me on your own flesh and blood?

Charles Surface. Nay, my little broker, don't be angry: what need *you* care, if you have your money's worth?

Sir Oliver. Well, I'll be the purchaser—I think I can dispose of the family.—(*Aside.*) Oh, I'll never forgive him this! never!

Enter CARELESS.

Careless. Come, Charles, what keeps you?

Charles Surface. I can't come yet. I'faith! we are going to have a sale above—here's little Premium will buy all my ancestors!

Careless. Oh, burn your ancestors!

Charles Surface. No, he may do that afterwards, if he pleases. Stay, Careless, we want you; egad, you shall be auctioneer—so come along with us.

Careless. Oh, have with you, if that's the case. I can handle a hammer as well as a dice box!

Sir Oliver. Oh, the profligates! (*Aside.*)

Charles Surface. Come, Moses, you shall be appraiser, if we want one.— Gad's life, little Premium, you don't seem to like the business.

Sir Oliver. Oh, yes, I do, vastly! Ha! ha! yes, yes, I think it a rare joke to sell one's family by auction—ha! ha!—(*Aside.*) Oh, the prodigal!

Charles Surface. To be sure! when a man wants money, where the plague

should he get assistance, if he can't make free with his own relations?
(*Exeunt.*)

ACT IV

SCENE I—*Picture-room at CHARLES'*

Enter CHARLES SURFACE, SIR OLIVER SURFACE, MOSES, and CARELESS.

Charles Surface. Walk in, gentlemen, pray walk in!—here they are, the family of the Surfaces, up to the Conquest.

Sir Oliver. And, in my opinion, a goodly collection.

Charles Surface. Aye, aye, these are done in true spirit of portrait-painting—no volunteer grace or expression—not like the works of your modern Raphael, who gives you the strongest resemblance, yet contrives to make your own portrait independent of you; so that you may sink the original and not hurt the picture. No, no; the merit of these is the inveterate likeness—all stiff and awkward as the originals, and like nothing in human nature beside!

Sir Oliver. Ah! We shall never see such figures of men again.

Charles Surface. I hope not. Well, you see, Master Premium, what a domestic character I am—here I sit of an evening surrounded by my family. But come, get to your pulpit, Mr. Auctioneer—here's an old gouty chair of my grandfather's will answer the purpose.

Careless. Aye, aye, this will do. But, Charles, I have ne'er a hammer; and what's an auctioneer without his hammer?

Charles Surface. Egad, that's true. What parchment have we here? (*Takes down a roll.*) *Richard, heir to Thomas*—our genealogy in full. Here, Careless, you shall have no common bit of mahogany—here's the family tree for you, you rogue—this shall be your hammer, and now you may knock down my ancestors with their own pedigree.

Sir Oliver (aside). What an unnatural rogue!—an *ex post facto* parricide!

Careless. Yes, yes, here's a list of your generation indeed; faith, Charles, this is the most convenient thing you could have found for the business, for 'twill serve not only as a hammer, but a catalogue into the bargain. But come, begin—A-going, a-going, a-going!

Charles Surface. Bravo, Careless! Well, here's my great uncle, Sir Richard Raviline, a marvellous good general in his day, I assure you. He served in all the Duke of Marlborough's wars, and got that cut over

his eye at the battle of Malplaquet.²⁵ What say you, Mr. Premium? look at him—there's a hero for you! not cut out of his feathers, as your modern clipped captains are, but enveloped in wig and regmentals, as a general should be. What do you bid?

Moses. Mr. Premium would have you speak.

Charles Surface. Why, then, he shall have him for ten pounds, and I am sure that's not dear for a staff officer.

Sir Oliver. Heaven deliver me! his famous uncle Richard for ten pounds!

(*Aside.*)—Very well, sir, I take him at that.

Charles Surface. Careless, knock down my uncle Richard.—Here, now, is a maiden sister of his, my great-aunt Deborah, done by Kneller,²⁶ thought to be in his best manner, and a very formidable likeness. There she is, you see, a shepherdess feeding her flock. You shall have her for five pounds ten—the sheep are worth the money.

Sir Oliver. Ah! poor Deborah! a woman who set such a value on herself!

(*Aside.*)—Five pound ten—she's mine.

Charles Surface. Knock down my aunt Deborah! Here, now, are two that were a sort of cousins of theirs.—You see, Moses, these pictures were done some time ago, when beaux wore wigs, and the ladies wore their own hair.

Sir Oliver. Yes, truly, head-dresses appear to have been a little lower in those days.

Charles Surface. Well, take that couple for the same.

Moses. 'Tis a good bargain.

Charles Surface. Careless!—This, now, is a grandfather of my mother's, a learned judge, well known on the western circuit.—What do you rate him at, Moses?

Moses. Four guineas.

Charles Surface. Four guineas! Gad's life, you don't bid me the price of his wig.—Mr. Premium, *you* have more respect for the woolsack;²⁷ do let us knock his lordship down at fifteen.

Sir Oliver. By all means.

Careless. Gone!

Charles Surface. And there are two brothers of his, William and Walter Blunt, Esquires, both members of Parliament, and noted speakers;

25. On September 11, 1709.

26. Sir Godfrey Kneller (1648–1723), who painted many portraits of English sovereigns and nobles.

27. "For lawyers." The reference to the Lord Chancellor's seat on the Woolsack in the House of Lords is here meant as the symbol of the profession of law.

and, what's very extraordinary, I believe that is the first time they were ever bought and sold.

Sir Oliver. That's very extraordinary, indeed! I'll take them at your own price, for the honour of Parliament.

Careless. Well said, little Premium! I'll knock 'em down at forty.

Charles Surface. Here's a jolly fellow—I don't know what relation, but he was mayor of Manchester; take him at eight pounds.

Sir Oliver. No, no—six will do for the mayor.

Charles Surface. Come, make it guineas, and I'll throw you the two aldermen there into the bargain.

Sir Oliver. They're mine.

Charles Surface. Careless, knock down the mayor and aldermen. But, plague on't! we shall be all day retailing in this manner; do let us deal wholesale—what say you, little Premium? Give me three hundred pounds for the rest of the family in the lump.

Careless. Aye, aye, that will be the best way.

Sir Oliver. Well, well, anything to accommodate you; they are mine. But there is one portrait which you have always passed over.

Careless. What, that ill-looking little fellow over the settee?

Sir Oliver. Yes, sir, I mean that; though I don't think him so ill-looking a little fellow, by any means.

Charles Surface. What, that? Oh, that's my uncle Oliver! 'Twas done before he went to India.

Careless. Your uncle Oliver! Gad, then you'll never be friends, Charles. That, now, to me, is as stern a looking rogue as ever I saw—an unforgiving eye, and a damned disinheriting countenance! an inveterate knave, depend on't. Don't you think so, little Premium?

Sir Oliver. Upon my soul, sir, I do not; I think it is as honest a looking face as any in the room, dead or alive. But I suppose your uncle Oliver goes with the rest of the lumber?

Charles Surface. No, hang it! I'll not part with poor Noll. The old fellow has been very good to me, and egad, I'll keep his picture while I've a room to put it in.

Sir Oliver. The rogue's my nephew after all! (*Aside.*)—But, sir, I have somehow taken a fancy to that picture.

Charles Surface. I'm sorry for't, for you certainly will not have it. Oons! haven't you got enough of 'em?

Sir Oliver. I forgive him everything! (*Aside.*)—But, sir, when I take a whim in my head, I don't value money. I'll give you as much for that as for all the rest.

Charles Surface. Don't tease me, master broker; I tell you I'll not part with it, and there's an end on't.

Sir Oliver. How like his father the dog is!—(*Aloud.*) Well, well, I have done. I did not perceive it before, but I think I never saw such a resemblance. Well, sir—here is a draught for your sum.

Charles Surface. Why, 'tis for eight hundred pounds!

Sir Oliver. You will not let Sir Oliver go?

Charles Surface. Zounds! no! I tell you, once more.

Sir Oliver. Then never mind the difference; we'll balance another time.

But give me your hand on the bargain; you are an honest fellow, Charles—I beg pardon, sir, for being so free.—Come, Moses.

Charles Surface. Egad, this is a whimsical old fellow!—but hark'ee, Premium, you'll prepare lodgings for these gentlemen.

Sir Oliver. Yes, yes, I'll send for them in a day or two.

Charles Surface. But hold—do now—send a genteel conveyance for them, for, I assure you, they were most of them used to ride in their own carriages.

Sir Oliver. I will, I will, for all but—Oliver.

Charles Surface. Aye, all but the little honest nabob.

Sir Oliver. You're fixed on that?

Charles Surface. Peremptorily.

Sir Oliver. A dear extravagant rogue! (*Aside.*)—Good day!—Come, Moses.—Let me hear now who dares call him profligate!

(*Exeunt SIR OLIVER and MOSES.*)

Careless. Why, this is the oddest genius of the sort I ever saw!

Charles Surface. Egad, he's the prince of brokers, I think. I wonder how the devil Moses got acquainted with so honest a fellow.—Ha! here's Rowley.—Do, Careless, say I'll join the company in a moment.

Careless. I will—but don't let that old blockhead persuade you to squander any of that money on old musty debts, or any such nonsense; for tradesmen, Charles, are the most exorbitant fellows!

Charles Surface. Very true, and paying them is only encouraging them.

Careless. Nothing else.

Charles Surface. Aye, aye, never fear. (*Exit CARELESS.*) So! this was an odd old fellow, indeed! Let me see, two-thirds of this is mine by right—five hundred and thirty pounds. 'Fore heaven! I find one's ancestors are more valuable relations than I took 'em for!—Ladies and gentlemen, your most obedient and very grateful humble servant.

Enter ROWLEY.

Ha! old Rowley! egad, you are just come in time to take leave of your old acquaintance.

Rowley. Yes, I heard they were going. But I wonder you can have such spirits under so many distresses.

Charles Surface. Why, there's the point—my distresses are so many, that I can't afford to part with my spirits; but I shall be rich and splenetic, all in good time. However, I suppose you are surprised that I am not more sorrowful at parting with so many near relations; to be sure, 'tis very affecting; but, rot 'em, you see they never move a muscle, so why should I?

Rowley. There's no making you serious a moment.

Charles Surface. Yes, faith: I am so now. Here, my honest Rowley, here, get me this changed, and take a hundred pounds of it immediately to old Stanley.

Rowley. A hundred pounds! Consider only—

Charles Surface. Gad's life, don't talk about it! poor Stanley's wants are pressing, and, if you don't make haste, we shall have some one call that has a better right to the money.

Rowley. Ah! there's the point! I never will cease dunning you with the old proverb—

Charles Surface. "Be just before you're generous," hey! Why, so I would if I could; but Justice is an old lame hobbling beldam, and I can't get her to keep pace with Generosity, for the soul of me.

Rowley. Yet, Charles, believe me, one hour's reflection—

Charles Surface. Aye, aye, it's all very true; but, hark'ee, Rowley, while I have, by heaven I'll give—so, damn your economy! and now for hazard. *(Exit.)*

SCENE II—*The parlour*

Enter SIR OLIVER SURFACE and MOSES.

Moses. Well, sir, I think, as Sir Peter said, you have seen Mr. Charles in high glory; 'tis great pity he's so extravagant.

Sir Oliver. True, but he wouldn't sell my picture.

Moses. And loves wine and women so much.

Sir Oliver. But he wouldn't sell my picture!

Moses. And games so deep.

Sir Oliver. But he wouldn't sell my picture. Oh, here's Rowley.

Enter ROWLEY.

Rowley. So, Sir Oliver, I find you have made a purchase—

Sir Oliver. Yes, yes, our young rake has parted with his ancestors like old tapestry.

Rowley. And here has he commissioned me to redeliver you part of the purchase-money—I mean, though, in your necessitous character of old Stanley.

Moses. Ah! there is the pity of all: he is so damned charitable.

Rowley. And I left a hosier and two tailors in the hall, who, I'm sure, won't be paid, and this hundred would satisfy 'em.

Sir Oliver. Well, well, I'll pay his debts—and his benevolence too; but now I am no more a broker, and you shall introduce me to the elder brother as old Stanley.

Rowley. Not yet awhile; Sir Peter, I know, means to call there about this time.

Enter TRIP

Trip. O gentlemen, I beg pardon for not showing you out; this way—
Moses, a word. (*Exeunt TRIP and MOSES.*)

Sir Oliver. There's a fellow for you! Would you believe it, that puppy intercepted the Jew on our coming, and wanted to raise money before he got to his master!

Rowley. Indeed!

Sir Oliver. Yes, they are now planning an annuity business. Ah, Master Rowley, in my days, servants were content with the follies of their masters, when they were worn a little threadbare—but now they have their vices, like their birthday clothes,²⁸ with the gloss on.

SCENE III—*A library in JOSEPH SURFACE'S house*

JOSEPH SURFACE and SERVANT.

Joseph Surface. No letter from Lady Teazle?

Servant. No, sir.

Joseph Surface (aside). I am surprised she hasn't sent, if she is prevented from coming. Sir Peter certainly does not suspect me. Yet I wish I may not lose the heiress, through the scrape I have drawn myself in with the wife; however, Charles's imprudence and bad character are great points in my favor. (Knocking.)

Servant. Sir, I believe that must be Lady Teazle.

28. Ceremonial dress for the King's Birthday celebrations.

Joseph Surface. Hold! See whether it is or not, before you go to the door—

I have a particular message for you, if it should be my brother.

Servant. 'Tis her ladyship, sir; she always leaves her chair at the milliner's in the next street.

Joseph Surface. Stay, stay—draw that screen before the window—that will do; my opposite neighbor is a maiden lady of so curious a temper. (*Servant draws the screen, and exit.*) I have a difficult hand to play in this affair. Lady Teazle has lately suspected my views on Maria; but she must by no means be let into that secret—at least, not till I have her more in my power.

Enter LADY TEAZLE.

Lady Teazle. What, sentiment in soliloquy! Have you been very impatient now? O lud! don't pretend to look grave. I vow I couldn't come before.

Joseph Surface. O madam, punctuality is a species of constancy, a very unfashionable quality in a lady.

Lady Teazle. Upon my word, you ought to pity me. Do you know that Sir Peter is grown so ill-tempered to me of late, and so jealous of Charles too—that's the best of the story, isn't it?

Joseph Surface (aside). I am glad my scandalous friends keep that up.

Lady Teazle. I am sure I wish he would let Maria marry him, and then perhaps he would be convinced; don't you, Mr. Surface?

Joseph Surface (aside). Indeed I do not.—Oh, certainly I do! for then my dear Lady Teazle would also be convinced how wrong her suspicions were of my having any design on the silly girl.

Lady Teazle. Well, well, I'm inclined to believe you. But isn't it provoking, to have the most ill-natured things said to one? And there's my friend Lady Sneerwell has circulated I don't know how many scandalous tales of me! and all without any foundation, too—that's what vexes me.

Joseph Surface. Aye, madam, to be sure, that is the provoking circumstance—without foundation! yes, yes, there's the mortification, indeed; for, when a scandalous story is believed against one, there certainly is no comfort like the consciousness of having deserved it.

Lady Teazle. No, to be sure—then I'd forgive their malice; but to attack me, who am really so innocent, and who never say an ill-natured thing of anybody—that is, of any friend—and then Sir Peter, too, to have him so peevish, and so suspicious, when I know the integrity of my own heart—indeed 'tis monstrous!

Joseph Surface. But, my dear Lady Teazle, 'tis your own fault if you suffer it. When a husband entertains a groundless suspicion of his wife, and withdraws his confidence from her, the original compact is broke, and she owes it to the honour of her sex to endeavour to outwit him.

Lady Teazle. Indeed! So that, if he suspects me without cause, it follows that the best way of curing his jealousy is to give him reason for't?

Joseph Surface. Undoubtedly—for your husband should never be deceived in you: and in that case it becomes *you* to be frail in compliment to his discernment.

Lady Teazle. To be sure, what you say is very reasonable, and when the consciousness of my own innocence—

Joseph Surface. Ah, my dear madam, there is the great mistake; 'tis this very conscious innocence that is of the greatest prejudice to you. What is it makes you negligent of forms, and careless of the world's opinion? why, the *consciousness* of your innocence. What makes you thoughtless in your conduct, and apt to run into a thousand little imprudences? why, the *consciousness* of your innocence. What makes you impatient of Sir Peter's temper and outrageous at his suspicions? why, the *consciousness* of your own innocence!

Lady Teazle. 'Tis very true!

Joseph Surface. Now, my dear Lady Teazle, if you would but once make a trifling *faux pas*, you can't conceive how cautious you would grow—and how ready to humour and agree with your husband.

Lady Teazle. Do you think so?

Joseph Surface. Oh, I'm sure on't; and then you would find all scandal would cease at once, for—in short, your character at present is like a person in a plethora, absolutely dying of too much health.

Lady Teazle. So, so; then I perceive your prescription is, that I must sin in my own defence, and part with my virtue to preserve my reputation?

Joseph Surface. Exactly so, upon my credit, ma'am.

Lady Teazle. Well, certainly this is the oddest doctrine, and the newest receipt for avoiding calumny?

Joseph Surface. An infallible one, believe me. *Prudence*, like *experience*, must be paid for.

Lady Teazle. Why, if my understanding were once convinced—

Joseph Surface. Oh, certainly, madam, your understanding *should* be convinced. Yes, yes—heaven forbid I should persuade you to do any-

thing you *thought* wrong. No, no, I have too much honour to desire it.

Lady Teazle. Don't you think we may as well leave honour out of the argument?

Joseph Surface. Ah, the ill effects of your country education, I see, still remain with you.

Lady Teazle. I doubt they do, indeed; and I will fairly own to you, that if I could be persuaded to do wrong, it would be by Sir Peter's ill usage sooner than your honourable logic, after all.

Joseph Surface. Then, by this hand, which he is unworthy of—

(*Taking her hand.*)

Re-enter SERVANT.

'Sdeath, you blockhead—what do you want?

Servant. I beg pardon, sir, but I thought you wouldn't choose Sir Peter to come up without announcing him.

Joseph Surface. Sir Peter!—Oons—the devil!

Lady Teazle. Sir Peter! O lud! I'm ruined! I'm ruined!

Servant. Sir, 'twasn't I let him in.

Lady Teazle. Oh! I'm undone! What will become of me, now, Mr. Logic?—Oh! mercy, he's on the stairs—I'll get behind here—and if ever I'm so imprudent again—

(*Goes behind the screen.*)

Joseph Surface. Give me that book.

(*Sits down.* SERVANT pretends to adjust his hair.)

Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE.

Sir Peter. Aye, ever improving himself!—Mr. Surface, Mr. Surface—

Joseph Surface. Oh, my dear Sir Peter, I beg your pardon. (*Gaping, and throws away the book.*) I have been dozing over a stupid book. Well, I am much obliged to you for this call. You haven't been here, I believe, since I fitted up this room. Books, you know, are the only things I am a coxcomb in.

Sir Peter. 'Tis very neat indeed. Well, well, that's proper; and you make even your screen a source of knowledge—hung, I perceive, with maps.

Joseph Surface. Oh, yes, I find great use in that screen.

Sir Peter. I dare say you must—certainly—when you want to find anything in a hurry.

Joseph Surface (aside). Aye, or to hide anything in a hurry either.

Sir Peter. Well, I have a little private business—

Joseph Surface. You needn't stay.

(*To SERVANT.*)

Servant. No, sir.

(*Exit.*)

Joseph Surface. Here's a chair, Sir Peter—I beg—

Sir Peter. Well, now we are alone, there is a subject, my dear friend, on which I wish to unburden my mind to you—a point of the greatest moment to my peace: in short, my good friend, Lady Teazle's conduct of late has made me extremely unhappy.

Joseph Surface. Indeed! I am very sorry to hear it.

Sir Peter. Yes, 'tis but too plain she has not the least regard for me; but, what's worse, I have pretty good authority to suspect she must have formed an attachment to another.

Joseph Surface. You astonish me!

Sir Peter. Yes! and, between ourselves, I think I have discovered the person.

Joseph Surface. How! you alarm me exceedingly.

Sir Peter. Aye, my dear friend, I knew you would sympathize with me!

Joseph Surface. Yes, believe me, Sir Peter, such a discovery would hurt me just as much as it would you.

Sir Peter. I am convinced of it. Ah! it is a happiness to have a friend whom one can trust even with one's family secrets. But have you no guess who I mean?

Joseph Surface. I haven't the most distant idea. It can't be Sir Benjamin Backbite!

Sir Peter. O, no! What say you to Charles?

Joseph Surface. My brother! impossible!

Sir Peter. Ah, my dear friend, the goodness of your own heart misleads you—you judge of others by yourself.

Joseph Surface. Certainly, Sir Peter, the heart that is conscious of its own integrity is ever slow to credit another's treachery.

Sir Peter. True; but your brother has no sentiment—you never hear him talk so.

Joseph Surface. Yet I can't but think Lady Teazle herself has too much principle—

Sir Peter. Aye; but what's her principle against the flattery of a handsome, lively young fellow?

Joseph Surface. That's very true.

Sir Peter. And then, you know, the difference of our ages makes it very improbable that she should have any great affection for me; and if she were to be frail, and I were to make it public, why the town would only laugh at me, the foolish old bachelor who had married a girl.

Joseph Surface. That's true, to be sure—they *would* laugh.

Sir Peter. Laugh! aye, and make ballads, and paragraphs, and the devil knows what of me.

Joseph Surface. No, you must never make it public.

Sir Peter. But then again—that the nephew of my old friend, Sir Oliver, should be the person to attempt such a wrong, hurts me more nearly.

Joseph Surface. Aye, there's the point. When ingratitude barbs the dart of injury, the wound has double danger in it.

Sir Peter. Aye—I, that was, in a manner, left his guardian—in whose house he had been so often entertained—who never in my life denied him—my advice!

Joseph Surface. Oh, 'tis not to be credited! There *may* be a man capable of such baseness, to be sure; but, for my part, till you can give me positive proofs, I cannot but doubt it. However, if it should be proved on him, he is no longer a brother of mine! I disclaim kindred with him—for the man who can break through the laws of hospitality, and attempt the wife of his friend, deserves to be branded as the pest of society.

Sir Peter. What a difference there is between you! What noble sentiments!

Joseph Surface. Yet I cannot suspect Lady Teazle's honour.

Sir Peter. I am sure I wish to think well of her, and to remove all ground of quarrel between us. She has lately reproached me more than once with having made no settlement on her; and, in our last quarrel, she almost hinted that she should not break her heart if I was dead. Now, as we seem to differ in our ideas of expense, I have resolved she shall be her own mistress in that respect for the future; and, if I *were* to die, she shall find that I have not been inattentive to her interest while living. Here, my friend, are the drafts of two deeds, which I wish to have your opinion on. By one, she will enjoy eight hundred a year independent while I live; and, by the other, the bulk of my fortune after my death.

Joseph Surface. This conduct, Sir Peter, is indeed truly generous.—(*Aside.*)
I wish it may not corrupt my pupil.

Sir Peter. Yes, I am determined she shall have no cause to complain, though I would not have her acquainted with the latter instance of my affection yet awhile.

Joseph Surface. Nor I, if I could help it. (Aside.)

Sir Peter. And now, my dear friend, if you please, we will talk over the situation of your hopes with Maria.

Joseph Surface (softly). No, no, Sir Peter; another time, if you please.

Sir Peter. I am sensibly chagrined at the little progress you seem to make in her affection.

Joseph Surface. I beg you will not mention it. What are my disappointments when your happiness is in debate! (*Softly.*)—’Sdeath, I shall be ruined every way! *(Aside.)*

Sir Peter. And though you are so averse to my acquainting Lady Teazle with your passion, I am sure she’s not your enemy in the affair.

Joseph Surface. Pray, Sir Peter, now oblige me. I am really too much affected by the subject we have been speaking on to bestow a thought on my own concerns. The man who is entrusted with his friend’s distresses can never—

Enter SERVANT.

Well, sir?

Servant. Your brother, sir, is speaking to a gentleman in the street, and says he knows you are within.

Joseph Surface. ’Sdeath, blockhead—I’m not within—I’m out for the day.

Sir Peter. Stay—hold—a thought has struck me—you shall be at home.

Joseph Surface. Well, well, let him up. (*Exit SERVANT.*) He’ll interrupt Sir Peter—however—

Sir Peter. Now, my good friend, oblige me, I entreat you. Before Charles comes, let me conceal myself somewhere; then do you tax him on the point we have been talking on, and his answers may satisfy me at once.

Joseph Surface. O, fie, Sir Peter! would you have me join in so mean a trick?—to trepan my brother to?

Sir Peter. Nay, you tell me you are *sure* he is innocent; if so, you do him the greatest service by giving him an opportunity to clear himself, and you will set my heart at rest. Come, you shall not refuse me; here, behind the screen will be (*Goes to the screen.*)—Hey! what the devil! there seems to be *one* listener here already—I’ll swear I saw a petticoat!

Joseph Surface. Ha! ha! ha! Well, this is ridiculous enough. I’ll tell you, Sir Peter, though I hold a man of intrigue to be a most despicable character, yet you know, it doesn’t follow that one is to be an absolute Joseph either! Hark’ee! ‘tis a little French milliner, a silly rogue that plagues me—and having some character—on your coming, she ran behind the screen.

Sir Peter. Ah, you rogue!—But, egad, she has overheard all I have been saying of my wife.

Joseph Surface. Oh, 'twill never go any further, you may depend on't!
Sir Peter. No! then, i'faith, let her hear it out. Here's a closet will do as well.

Joseph Surface. Well, go in then.

Sir Peter. Sly rogue! sly rogue! (Goes into the closet.)

Joseph Surface. A very narrow escape, indeed! and a curious situation
I'm in, to part man and wife in this manner.

Lady Teazle (*peeping from the screen*). Couldn't I steal off?

Joseph Surface. Keep close, my angel!

Sir Peter (*peeping out*). Joseph, tax him home.

Joseph Surface. Back, my dear friend!

Lady Teazle (*peeping*). Couldn't you lock Sir Peter in?

Joseph Surface. Be still, my life!

Sir Peter (*peeping*). You're sure the little milliner won't blab?

Joseph Surface. In, in, my dear Sir Peter!—Fore gad, I wish I had a key to
the door.

Enter CHARLES SURFACE.

Charles Surface. Hollo! brother, what has been the matter? Your fellow
would not let me up at first. What! have you had a Jew or a wench
with you?

Joseph Surface. Neither, brother, I assure you.

Charles Surface. But what has made Sir Peter steal off? I thought he had
been with you.

Joseph Surface. He was, brother; but, hearing *you* were coming, he did
not choose to stay.

Charles Surface. What! was the old gentleman afraid I wanted to borrow
money of him!

Joseph Surface. No, sir: but I am sorry to find, Charles, that you have
lately given that worthy man grounds for great uneasiness.

Charles Surface. Yes, they tell me I do that to a great many worthy men.
But how so, pray?

Joseph Surface. To be plain with you, brother, he thinks you are
endeavouring to gain Lady Teazle's affections from him.

Charles Surface. Who, I? O lud! not I, upon my word. Ha! ha! ha! so the old
fellow has found out that he has got a young wife, has he?—or, what's
worse, has her ladyship discovered that she has an old husband?

Joseph Surface. This is no subject to jest on, brother. He who can laugh—
Charles Surface. True, true, as you were going to say—then, seriously, I

never had the least idea of what you charge me with, upon my honour.

Joseph Surface. Well, it will give Sir Peter great satisfaction to hear this.
(Aloud.)

Charles Surface. To be sure, I once thought the lady seemed to have taken a fancy to me; but, upon my soul, I never gave her the least encouragement. Besides, you know my attachment to Maria.

Joseph Surface. But sure, brother, even if Lady Teazle had betrayed the fondest partiality for you—

Charles Surface. Why, look'ee, Joseph, I hope I shall never deliberately do a dishonourable action—but if a pretty woman were purposely to throw herself in my way—and that pretty woman married to a man old enough to be her father—

Joseph Surface. Well!

Charles Surface. Why, I believe I should be obliged to borrow a little of your morality, that's all. But, brother, do you know now that you surprise me exceedingly, by naming *me* with Lady Teazle; for, faith, I always understood *you* were her favourite.

Joseph Surface. Oh, for shame, Charles! This retort is foolish.

Charles Surface. Nay, I swear I have seen you exchange such significant glances—

Joseph Surface. Nay, nay, sir, this is no jest—

Charles Surface. Egad, I'm serious! Don't you remember—one day, when I called here—

Joseph Surface. Nay, prithee, Charles—

Charles Surface. And found you together—

Joseph Surface. Zounds, sir, I insist—

Charles Surface. And another time, when your servant—

Joseph Surface. Brother, brother, a word with you!—*(Aside.)* Gad, I must stop him.

Charles Surface. Informed me, I say, that—

Joseph Surface. Hush! I beg your pardon, but Sir Peter has overheard all we have been saying—I knew you would clear yourself, or I should not have consented.

Charles Surface. How, Sir Peter! Where is he?

Joseph Surface. Softly, there! *(Points to the closet.)*

Charles Surface. Oh, 'fore heaven, I'll have him out.—Sir Peter, come forth!

Joseph Surface. No, no—

Charles Surface. I say, Sir Peter, come into court. (*Pulls in SIR PETER.*)

What! my old guardian!—What—turn inquisitor, and take evidence, incog?

Sir Peter. Give me your hand, Charles—I believe I have suspected you wrongfully—but you mustn’t be angry with Joseph—’twas my plan!

Charles Surface. Indeed!

Sir Peter. But I acquit you. I promise you I don’t think near so ill of you as I did. What I have heard has given me great satisfaction.

Charles Surface. Egad, then, ’twas lucky you didn’t hear any more. Wasn’t it, Joseph? (*Half aside.*)

Sir Peter. Ah! you would have retorted on him.

Charles Surface. Aye, aye, that was a joke.

Sir Peter. Yes, yes, I know his honour too well.

Charles Surface. But you might as well have suspected him as me in this matter, for all that. Mightn’t he, Joseph? (*Half aside.*)

Sir Peter. Well, well, I believe you.

Joseph Surface. Would they were both out of the room! (*Aside.*)

Sir Peter. And in future, perhaps, we may not be such strangers.

Enter SERVANT who whispers JOSEPH SURFACE.

Joseph Surface. Lady Sneerwell!—stop her by all means—(*Exit SERVANT.*)

Gentlemen—I beg pardon—I must wait on you downstairs—here’s a person come on particular business.

Charles Surface. Well, you can see him in another room. Sir Peter and I haven’t met a long time, and I have something to say to him.

Joseph Surface. They must not be left together. I’ll send Lady Sneerwell away, and return directly.—(*Aside.*) Sir Peter, not a word of the French milliner. (*Exit JOSEPH SURFACE.*)

Sir Peter. Oh! not for the world!—Ah, Charles, if you associated more with your brother, one might indeed hope for your reformation. He is a man of sentiment. Well, there is nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment!

Charles Surface. Pshaw! he is too moral by half, and so apprehensive of his good name, as he calls it, that I suppose he would as soon let a priest into his house as a girl.

Sir Peter. No, no—come, come—you wrong him. No, no, Joseph is no rake, but he is not such a saint in that respect either—I have a great mind to tell him—we should have a laugh! (*Aside.*)

Charles Surface. Oh, hang him! he’s a very anchorite, a young hermit!

Sir Peter. Hark'ee—you must not abuse him; he may chance to hear of it again, I promise you.

Charles Surface. Why, you won't tell him?

Sir Peter. No—but>this way.—(*Aside.*) Egad, I'll tell him.—Hark'ee, have you a mind to have a good laugh at Joseph?

Charles Surface. I should like it of all things.

Sir Peter. Then, i'faith, we will!—I'll be quit with him for discovering me. (*Aside.*)—He had a girl with him when I called.

Charles Surface. What! Joseph? you jest.

Sir Peter. Hush!—a little—French milliner—and the best of the jest is—she's in the room now.

Charles Surface. The devil she is!

Sir Peter. Hush! I tell you. (Points to the screen.)

Charles Surface. Behind the screen! 'Slife, let's unveil her!

Sir Peter. No, no, he's coming: you shan't, indeed!

Charles Surface. Oh, egad, we'll have a peep at the little milliner!

Sir Peter. Not for the world! Joseph will never forgive me.

Charles Surface. I'll stand by you—

Sir Peter. (*Struggling with Charles.*) Odds, here he is!

JOSEPH SURFACE enters just as CHARLES throws down the screen.

Charles Surface. Lady Teazle, by all that's wonderful!

Sir Peter. Lady Teazle, by all that's horrible!

Charles Surface. Sir Peter, this is one of the smartest French milliners I ever saw. Egad, you seem all to have been diverting yourselves here at hide and seek—and I don't see who is out of the secret. Shall I beg your ladyship to inform me?—Not a word!—Brother, will you please to explain this matter? What! Morality dumb too!—Sir Peter, though I found you in the dark, perhaps you are not so now! all mute! Well—though I can make nothing of the affair, I suppose you perfectly understand one another; so I'll leave you to yourselves. (*Going.*) Brother, I'm sorry to find you have given that worthy man so much uneasiness. Sir Peter! there's nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment! (Exit CHARLES.)

They stand for some time looking at each other.

Joseph Surface. Sir Peter—notwithstanding I confess that appearances are against me—if you will afford me your patience—I make no doubt but I shall explain everything to your satisfaction.

Sir Peter. If you please—

Joseph Surface. The fact is, sir, that Lady Teazle, knowing my pretensions to your ward Maria—I say, sir, Lady Teazle, being apprehensive of the jealousy of your temper—and knowing my friendship to the family—she, sir, I say—called here—in order that—I might explain those pretensions—but on your coming—being apprehensive—as I said—of your jealousy—she withdrew—and this, you may depend on’t is the whole truth of the matter.

Sir Peter. A very clear account, upon my word; and I dare swear the lady will vouch for every article of it.

Lady Teazle (coming forward). For not one word of it, Sir Peter!

Sir Peter. How! don’t you think it worth while to agree in the lie?

Lady Teazle. There is not one syllable of truth in what that gentleman has told you.

Sir Peter. I believe you, upon my soul, ma’am!

Joseph Surface (aside). 'Sdeath, madam, will you betray me?

Lady Teazle. Good Mr. Hypocrite, by your leave, I will speak for myself.

Sir Peter. Aye, let her alone, sir; you’ll find she’ll make out a better story than you, without prompting.

Lady Teazle. Hear me, Sir Peter!—I came here on no matter relating to your ward, and even ignorant of this gentleman’s pretensions to her—but I came, seduced by his insidious arguments, at least to listen to his pretended passion, if not to sacrifice *your* honour to his baseness.

Sir Peter. Now, I believe, the truth *is* coming, indeed!

Joseph Surface. The woman’s mad!

Lady Teazle. No, sir; she has recovered her senses, and your own arts have furnished her with the means.—Sir Peter, I do not expect you to credit me—but the tenderness you expressed for me, when I am sure you could not think I was a witness to it, has penetrated to my heart, and had I left the place without the shame of this discovery, my future life should have spoken the sincerity of my gratitude. As for that smooth-tongue hypocrite, who would have seduced the wife of his too credulous friend, while he affected honourable addresses to his ward—I behold him now in a light so truly despicable, that I shall never again respect myself for having listened to him. (*Exit.*)

Joseph Surface. Notwithstanding all this, Sir Peter, heaven knows—

Sir Peter. That you are a villain!—and so I leave you to your conscience.

Joseph Surface. You are too rash, Sir Peter; you shall hear me. The man who shuts out conviction by refusing to—

Sir Peter. Oh!— (*Exeunt, JOSEPH SURFACE following and speaking.*)

ACT V

SCENE I—*The library in JOSEPH SURFACE'S house*

Enter JOSEPH SURFACE and SERVANT.

Joseph Surface. Mr. Stanley! why should you think I would see him? you must know he comes to ask something.

Servant. Sir, I should not have let him in, but that Mr. Rowley came to the door with him.

Joseph Surface. Pshaw! blockhead! to suppose that I should now be in a temper to receive visits from poor relations! Well, why don't you show the fellow up?

Servant. I will, sir. Why, sir, it was not my fault that Sir Peter discovered my lady—

Joseph Surface. Go, fool! (Exit SERVANT.)

Sure, Fortune never played a man of my policy such a trick before! My character with Sir Peter, my hopes with Maria, destroyed in a moment! I'm in a rare humour to listen to other people's distresses! I shan't be able to bestow even a benevolent sentiment on Stanley.—So! here he comes, and Rowley with him. I must try to recover myself—and put a little charity into my face, however. (Exit.)

Enter SIR OLIVER SURFACE and ROWLEY.

Sir Oliver. What! does he avoid us? That was he, was it not?

Rowley. It was, sir—but I doubt you are come a little too abruptly—his nerves are so weak, that the sight of a poor relation may be too much for him. I should have gone first to break you to him.

Sir Oliver. A plague of his nerves! Yet this is he whom Sir Peter extols as a man of the most benevolent way of thinking!

Rowley. As to his way of thinking, I cannot pretend to decide; for, to do him justice, he appears to have as much speculative benevolence as any private gentleman in the kingdom, though he is seldom so sensual as to indulge himself in the exercise of it.

Sir Oliver. Yet has a string of charitable sentiments, I suppose, at his fingers' ends!

Rowley. Or, rather, at his tongue's end, Sir Oliver; for I believe there is no sentiment he has more faith in than that "Charity begins at home."

Sir Oliver. And his, I presume, is of that domestic sort which never stirs abroad at all.

Rowley. I doubt you'll find it so; but he's coming—I mustn't seem to interrupt you; and you know, immediately as you leave him, I come in to announce your arrival in your real character.

Sir Oliver. True; and afterwards you'll meet me at Sir Peter's.

Rowley. Without losing a moment.

(*Exit ROWLEY.*)

Sir Oliver. So! I don't like the complaisance of his features.

Re-enter JOSEPH SURFACE.

Joseph Surface. Sir, I beg you ten thousand pardons for keeping you a moment waiting—Mr. Stanley, I presume.

Sir Oliver. At your service.

Joseph Surface. Sir, I beg you will do me the honour to sit down—I entreat you, sir.

Sir Oliver. Dear sir—there's no occasion.—Too civil by half! (*Aside.*)

Joseph Surface. I have not the pleasure of knowing you, Mr. Stanley; but I am extremely happy to see you look so well. You were nearly related to my mother, I think, Mr. Stanley?

Sir Oliver. I was, sir—so nearly that my present poverty, I fear, may do discredit to her wealthy children—else I should not have presumed to trouble you.

Joseph Surface. Dear sir, there needs no apology: he that is in distress, though a stranger, has a right to claim kindred with the wealthy; I am sure I wish *I* was one of that class, and had it in my power to offer you even a small relief.

Sir Oliver. If your uncle, Sir Oliver, were here, I should have a friend.

Joseph Surface. I wish he were, sir, with all my heart: you should not want an advocate with him, believe me, sir.

Sir Oliver. I should not *need* one—my distresses would recommend me; but I imagined his bounty had enabled *you* to become the agent of his charity.

Joseph Surface. My dear sir, you were strangely misinformed. Sir Oliver is a worthy man, a very worthy sort of man; but—avarice, Mr. Stanley, is the vice of age. I will tell you, my good sir, in confidence, what he has done for me has been a mere nothing; though people, I know, have thought otherwise, and, for my part, I never chose to contradict the report.

Sir Oliver. What! has he never transmitted you bullion! rupees!²⁹ pagodas!³⁰

29. Silver coins of India, then valued at two shillings.

30. Gold coins of India, then valued at eight shillings.

Joseph Surface. O dear sir, nothing of the kind! No, no; a few presents now and then—china—shawls—Congo tea—avadavats,³¹ and Indian crackers³²—little more, believe me.

Sir Oliver (aside). Here's gratitude for twelve thousand pounds!—Avadavats and Indian crackers!

Joseph Surface. Then, my dear sir, you have heard, I doubt not, of the extravagance of my brother; there are very few would credit what I have done for that unfortunate young man.

Sir Oliver. Not I, for one! (Aside.)

Joseph Surface. The sums I have lent him! Indeed I have been exceedingly to blame—it was an amiable weakness: however, I don't pretend to defend it—and now I feel it doubly culpable, since it has deprived me of the pleasure of serving *you*, Mr. Stanley, as my heart dictates.

Sir Oliver (aside). Dissembler!—Then, sir, you cannot assist me?

Joseph Surface. At present, it grieves me to say, I cannot; but, whenever I have the ability, you may depend upon hearing from me.

Sir Oliver. I am extremely sorry—

Joseph Surface. Not more than I am, believe me; to pity, without the power to relieve, is still more painful than to ask and be denied.

Sir Oliver. Kind sir, your most obedient humble servant.

Joseph Surface. You leave me deeply affected, Mr. Stanley.—William, be ready to open the door.

Sir Oliver. O dear sir, no ceremony.

Joseph Surface. Your very obedient.

Sir Oliver. Sir, your most obsequious.

Joseph Surface. You may depend upon hearing from me, whenever I can be of service.

Sir Oliver. Sweet sir, you are too good.

Joseph Surface. In the meantime I wish you health and spirits.

Sir Oliver. Your ever grateful and perpetual humble servant.

Joseph Surface. Sir, yours as sincerely.

Sir Oliver. Now I am satisfied! (Exit.)

Joseph Surface (solus). This is one bad effect of a good character; it invites applications from the unfortunate, and there needs no small degree of address to gain the reputation of benevolence without incurring the expense. The silver ore of pure charity is an expensive article in the catalogue of a man's good qualities; whereas the senti-

31. Small singing birds of India, having red and black plumage.

32. Fire-crackers with colored wrappers.

mental French plate I use instead of it makes just as good a show, and pays no tax.

Enter ROWLEY.

Rowley. Mr. Surface, your servant—I was apprehensive of interrupting you—though my business demands immediate attention—as this note will inform you.

Joseph Surface. Always happy to see Mr. Rowley. (*Reads.*) How! Oliver-Surface!—My uncle arrived!

Rowley. He is, indeed—we have just parted—quite well, after a speedy voyage, and impatient to embrace his worthy nephew.

Joseph Surface. I am astonished!—William! stop Mr. Stanley, if he's not gone.

Rowley. Oh! he's out of reach, I believe.

Joseph Surface. Why didn't you let me know this when you came in together?

Rowley. I thought you had particular business. But I must be gone to inform your brother, and appoint him here to meet his uncle. He will be with you in a quarter of an hour.

Joseph Surface. So he says. Well, I am strangely overjoyed at his coming.—(*Aside.*) Never, to be sure, was anything so damned unlucky!

Rowley. You will be delighted to see how well he looks.

Joseph Surface. Oh! I'm rejoiced to hear it.—(*Aside.*) Just at this time!

Rowley. I'll tell him how impatiently you expect him.

Joseph Surface. Do, do; pray give my best duty and affection. Indeed, I cannot express the sensations I feel at the thought of seeing him. (*Exit ROWLEY.*) Certainly his coming just at this time is the cruellest piece of ill fortune. (*Exit.*)

SCENE II—*At SIR PETER'S*

Enter MRS. CANDOUR and MAID.

Maid. Indeed, ma'am, my lady will see nobody at present.

Mrs. Candour. Did you tell her it was her friend Mrs. Candour?

Maid. Yes, madam; but she begs you will excuse her.

Mrs. Candour. Do go again; I shall be glad to see her, if it be only for a moment, for I am sure she must be in great distress. (*Exit MAID.*) Dear heart, how provoking! I'm not mistress of half the circumstances! We shall have the whole affair in the newspapers, with the

names of the parties at length, before I have dropped the story at a dozen houses.

Enter SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE.

O dear Sir Benjamin! you have heard, I suppose—
Sir Benjamin. Of Lady Teazle and Mr. Surface—
Mrs. Candour. And Sir Peter's discovery—
Sir Benjamin. Oh, the strangest piece of business, to be sure!
Mrs. Candour. Well, I never was so surprised in my life. I am so sorry for all parties, indeed I am.
Sir Benjamin. Now, I don't pity Sir Peter at all—he was so extravagantly partial to Mr. Surface.
Mrs. Candour. Mr. Surface! Why, 'twas with Charles Lady Teazle was detected.
Sir Benjamin. No such thing—Mr. Surface is the gallant.
Mrs. Candour. No, no—Charles is the man. 'Twas Mr. Surface brought Sir Peter on purpose to discover them.
Sir Benjamin. I tell you I have it from one—
Mrs. Candour. And I have it from one—
Sir Benjamin. Who had it from one, who had it—
Mrs. Candour. From one immediately—But here's Lady Sneerwell; perhaps she knows the whole affair.

Enter LADY SNEERWELL

Lady Sneerwell. So, my dear Mrs. Candour, here's a sad affair of our friend Lady Teazle!
Mrs. Candour. Aye, my dear friend, who could have thought it—
Lady Sneerwell. Well, there's no trusting appearances; though, indeed, she was always too lively for me.
Mrs. Candour. To be sure, her manners were a little too free—but she was very young!
Lady Sneerwell. And had, indeed, some good qualities.
Mrs. Candour. So she had, indeed. But have you heard the particulars?
Lady Sneerwell. No; but everybody says that Mr. Surface—
Sir Benjamin. Aye, there, I told you—Mr. Surface was the man.
Mrs. Candour. No, no, indeed—the assignation was with Charles.
Lady Sneerwell. With Charles! You alarm me, Mrs. Candour.
Mrs. Candour. Yes, yes, he was the lover. Mr. Surface—do him justice—was only the informer.

Sir Benjamin. Well, I'll not dispute with you, Mrs. Candour; but, be it which it may, I hope that Sir Peter's wound will not—

Mrs. Candour. Sir Peter's wound! Oh, mercy! I didn't hear a word of their fighting.

Lady Sneerwell. Nor I, a syllable.

Sir Benjamin. No! what, no mention of the duel?

Mrs. Candour. Not a word.

Sir Benjamin. O Lord—yes, yes—they fought before they left the room.

Lady Sneerwell. Pray let us hear.

Mrs. Candour. Aye, do oblige us with the duel.

Sir Benjamin. "Sir," says Sir Peter—immediately after the discovery—"you are a most ungrateful fellow."

Mrs. Candour. Aye, to Charles—

Sir Benjamin. No, no—to Mr. Surface—"a most ungrateful fellow; and old as I am, sir," says he, "I insist on immediate satisfaction."

Mrs. Candour. Aye, that must have been to Charles; for 'tis very unlikely Mr. Surface should go to fight in his house.

Sir Benjamin. 'Gad's life, ma'am, not at all—"giving me immediate satisfaction." On this, madam, Lady Teazle, seeing Sir Peter in such danger, ran out of the room in strong hysterics, and Charles after her, calling out for hartshorn and water! Then, madam, they began to fight with swords—

Enter CRABTREE.

Crabtree. With pistols, nephew—I have it from undoubted authority.

Mrs. Candour. O Mr. Crabtree, then it is all true!

Crabtree. Too true, indeed, ma'am, and Sir Peter's dangerously wounded—

Sir Benjamin. By a thrust of in *seconde*³³ quite through his left side—

Crabtree. By a bullet lodged in the thorax.

Mrs. Candour. Mercy on me! Poor Sir Peter!

Crabtree. Yes, ma'am—though Charles would have avoided the matter, if he could.

Mrs. Candour. I knew Charles was the person.

Sir Benjamin. Oh, my uncle, I see, knows nothing of the matter.

Crabtree. But Sir Peter taxed him with the basest ingratitude—

Sir Benjamin. That I told you, you know.

33. A term in fencing.

Crabtree. Do, nephew, let me speak!—and insisted on an immediate—
Sir Benjamin. Just as I said.

Crabtree. Odds life, nephew, allow others to know something too! A pair of pistols lay on the bureau (for Mr. Surface, it seems, had come the night before late from Salt-Hill, where he had been to see the Montem ³⁴ with a friend, who has a son at Eton), so, unluckily, the pistols were left charged.

Sir Benjamin. I heard nothing of this.

Crabtree. Sir Peter forced Charles to take one, and they fired, it seems, pretty nearly together. Charles's shot took place, as I told you, and Sir Peter's missed; but, what is very extraordinary, the ball struck against a little bronze Pliny that stood over the chimney-piece, grazed out of the window at a right angle, and wounded the postman, who was just coming to the door with a double letter from Northamptonshire.

Sir Benjamin. My uncle's account is more circumstantial, I must confess; but I believe mine is the true one, for all that.

Lady Sneerwell (aside). I am more interested in this affair than they imagine, and must have better information. (*Exit LADY SNEERWELL.*)

Sir Benjamin (after a pause looking at each other). Ah! Lady Sneerwell's alarm is very easily accounted for.

Crabtree. Yes, yes, they certainly *do* say—but that's neither here nor there.

Mrs. Candour. But, pray, where is Sir Peter at present?

Crabtree. Oh! they brought him home, and he is now in the house, though the servants are ordered to deny it.

Mrs. Candour. I believe so, and Lady Teazle, I suppose, attending him.

Crabtree. Yes, yes; I saw one of the faculty enter just before me.

Sir Benjamin. Hey! who comes here?

Crabtree. Oh, this is he—the physician, depend on't.

Mrs. Candour. Oh, certainly! it must be the physician; and now we shall know.

Enter SIR OLIVER SURFACE.

Crabtree. Well, doctor, what hopes?

Mrs. Candour. Aye, doctor, how's your patient?

Sir Benjamin. Now, doctor, isn't it a wound with a small-sword?

34. It was formerly the custom of Eton school boys to go to Salt-Hill (*processus ad montem*) every third year on Whit-Tuesday, and levy *salt-money* from the onlookers at the ceremony.

Crabtree. A bullet lodged in the thorax, for a hundred!

Sir Oliver. Doctor! a wound with a small-sword! and a bullet in the thorax? Oons! are you mad, good people?

Sir Benjamin. Perhaps, sir, you are not a doctor?

Sir Oliver. Truly, I am to thank you for my degree, if I am.

Crabtree. Only a friend of Sir Peter's, then, I presume. But, sir, you must have heard of this accident?

Sir Oliver. Not a word!

Crabtree. Not of his being dangerously wounded?

Sir Oliver. The devil he is!

Sir Benjamin. Run through the body—

Crabtree. Shot in the breast—

Sir Benjamin. By one Mr. Surface—

Crabtree. Aye, the younger.

Sir Oliver. Hey! what the plague! you seem to differ strangely in your accounts—however, you agree that Sir Peter is dangerously wounded.

Sir Benjamin. Oh, yes, we agree there.

Crabtree. Yes, yes, I believe there can be no doubt of that.

Sir Oliver. Then, upon my word, for a person in that situation, he is the most imprudent man alive—for here he comes, walking as if nothing at all were the matter.

Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE.

Odds heart, Sir Peter! you are come in good time, I promise you; for we had just *given you over*.

Sir Benjamin. Egad, uncle, this is the most sudden recovery!

Sir Oliver. Why, man! what do you do out of bed with a small-sword through your body, and a bullet lodged in your thorax?

Sir Peter. A small-sword and a bullet?

Sir Oliver. Aye; these gentlemen would have killed you without law or physic, and wanted to dub me a doctor—to make me an accomplice

Sir Peter. Why, what is all this?

Sir Benjamin. We rejoice, Sir Peter, that the story of the duel is not true and are sincerely sorry for your other misfortunes.

Sir Peter. So; so; all over the town already. (Aside.)

Crabtree. Though, Sir Peter, you were certainly vastly to blame to marry at all, at your years.

Sir Peter. Sir, what business is that of yours?

Mrs. Candour. Though, indeed, as Sir Peter made so good a husband, he's very much to be pitied.

Sir Peter. Plague on your pity, ma'am! I desire none of it.

Sir Benjamin. However, Sir Peter, you must not mind the laughing and jests you will meet with on this occasion.

Sir Peter. Sir, I desire to be master in my own house.

Crabtree. 'Tis no uncommon case, that's one comfort.

Sir Peter. I insist on being left to myself: without ceremony, I insist on your leaving my house directly!

Mrs. Candour. Well, well, we are going; and depend on't, we'll make the best report of you we can.

Sir Peter. Leave my house!

Crabtree. And tell how hardly you have been treated.

Sir Peter. Leave my house!

Sir Benjamin. And how patiently you bear it.

Sir Peter. Fiends! vipers! furies! Oh! that their own venom would choke them!

(*Exeunt MRS. CANDOUR, SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE, CRABTREE, etc.*)

Sir Oliver. They are very provoking indeed, Sir Peter.

Enter ROWLEY.

Rowley. I heard high words—what has ruffled you, Sir Peter?

Sir Peter. Pshaw! what signifies asking? Do I ever pass a day without my vexations?

Sir Oliver. Well, I'm not inquisitive—I come only to tell you that I have seen both my nephews in the manner we proposed.

Sir Peter. A precious couple they are!

Rowley. Yes, and Sir Oliver is convinced that your judgment was right, Sir Peter.

Sir Oliver. Yes, I find Joseph is indeed the man, after all.

Rowley. Yes, as Sir Peter says, he's a man of sentiment.

Sir Oliver. And acts up to the sentiments he professes.

Rowley. It certainly is edification to hear him talk.

Sir Oliver. Oh, he's a model for the young men of the age! But how's this, Sir Peter? you don't join in your friend Joseph's praise, as I expected.

Sir Peter. Sir Oliver, we live in a damned wicked world, and the fewer we praise the better.

Rowley. What! do you say so, Sir Peter, who were never mistaken in your life?

Sir Peter. Pshaw! plague on you both! I see by your sneering you have heard the whole affair. I shall go mad among you!

Rowley. Then, to fret you no longer, Sir Peter, we are indeed acquainted with it all. I met Lady Teazle coming from Mr. Surface's, so humbled that she deigned to request me to be her advocate with you.

Sir Peter. And does Sir Oliver know all too?

Sir Oliver. Every circumstance.

Sir Peter. What, of the closet—and the screen, hey?

Sir Oliver. Yes, yes, and the little French milliner. Oh, I have been vastly diverted with the story! ha! ha!

Sir Peter. 'Twas very pleasant.

Sir Oliver. I never laughed more in my life, I assure you: ha! ha!

Sir Peter. O, vastly diverting! ha! ha!

Rowley. To be sure, Joseph with his sentiments! ha! ha!

Sir Peter. Yes, yes, his sentiments! ha! ha! A hypocritical villain!

Sir Oliver. Aye, and that rogue Charles to pull Sir Peter out of the closet: ha! ha!

Sir Peter. Ha! ha! 'twas devilish entertaining, to be sure!

Sir Oliver. Ha! ha! Egad, Sir Peter, I should like to have seen your face when the screen was thrown down: ha! ha!

Sir Peter. Yes, yes, my face when the screen was thrown down: ha! ha! Oh, I must never show my head again!

Sir Oliver. But come, come, it isn't fair to laugh at you neither, my old friend—though, upon my soul, I can't help it.

Sir Peter. Oh, pray don't restrain your mirth on my account—it does not hurt me at all! I laugh at the whole affair myself. Yes, yes, I think being a standing jest for all one's acquaintances a very happy situation. O yes, and then of a morning to read the paragraphs about Mr. S--, Lady T--, and Sir P--, will be so entertaining!

Rowley. Without affectation, Sir Peter, you may despise the ridicule of fools. But I see Lady Teazle going towards the next room; I am sure you must desire a reconciliation as earnestly as she does.

Sir Oliver. Perhaps my being here prevents her coming to you. Well, I'll leave honest Rowley to mediate between you; but he must bring you all presently to Mr. Surface's, where I am now returning, if not to reclaim a libertine, at least to expose hypocrisy.

Sir Peter. Ah! I'll be present at your discovering yourself there with all my heart—though 'tis a vile unlucky place for discoveries!

Rowley. We'll follow.

(*Exit SIR OLIVER SURFACE.*)

Sir Peter. She is not coming here, you see, Rowley.

Rowley. No, but she has left the door of that room open, you perceive. See, she is in tears!

Sir Peter. Certainly a little mortification appears very becoming in a wife!

Don't you think it will do her good to let her pine a little?

Rowley. Oh, this is ungenerous in you!

Sir Peter. Well, I know not what to think. You remember, Rowley, the letter I found of hers, evidently intended for Charles!

Rowley. A mere forgery, Sir Peter! laid in your way on purpose. This is one of the points which I intend Snake shall give you conviction on.

Sir Peter. I wish I were once satisfied of that. She looks this way. What a remarkably elegant turn of the head she has! Rowley, I'll go to her.

Rowley. Certainly.

Sir Peter. Though, when it is known that we are reconciled, people will laugh at me ten times more!

Rowley. Let them laugh, and retort their malice only by showing them you are happy in spite of it.

Sir Peter. I'faith, so I will! and, if I'm not mistaken, we may yet be the happiest couple in the country.

Rowley. Nay, Sir Peter—he who once lays aside suspicion—

Sir Peter. Hold, my dear Rowley! if you have any regard for me, never let me hear you utter anything like a sentiment—I have had enough of them to serve me the rest of my life. *(Exeunt.)*

SCENE III—*The library in JOSEPH SURFACE'S house.*

JOSEPH SURFACE and LADY SNEERWELL.

Lady Sneerwell. Impossible! Will not Sir Peter immediately be reconciled to Charles, and of consequence no longer oppose his union with Maria? The thought is distraction to me!

Joseph Surface. Can passion furnish a remedy?

Lady Sneerwell. No, nor cunning either. Oh, I was a fool, an idiot, to league with such a blunderer!

Joseph Surface. Sure, Lady Sneerwell, I am the greatest sufferer; yet you see I bear the accident with calmness.

Lady Sneerwell. Because the disappointment doesn't reach your *heart*; your *interest* only attached you to Maria. Had you felt for *her* what I have for that ungrateful libertine, neither your temper nor hypocrisy could prevent your showing the sharpness of your vexation.

Joseph Surface. But why should your reproaches fall on *me* for this disappointment?

Lady Sneerwell Are you not the cause of it? What had you to do to bate

in your pursuit of Maria to pervert Lady Teazle by the way? Had you not a sufficient field for your roguery in blinding Sir Peter, and supplanting your brother? I hate such an avarice of crimes; 'tis an unfair monopoly, and never prospers.

Joseph Surface. Well, I admit I have been to blame. I confess I deviated from the direct road of wrong, but I don't think we're so totally defeated neither.

Lady Sneerwell. No!

Joseph Surface. You tell me you have made a trial of Snake since we met, and that you still believe him faithful to us—

Lady Sneerwell. I do believe so.

Joseph Surface. And that he has undertaken, should it be necessary, to swear and prove that Charles is at this time contracted by vows and honour to your ladyship—which some of his former letters to you will serve to support?

Lady Sneerwell. This, indeed, might have assisted.

Joseph Surface. Come, come; it is not too late yet—(*Knocking at the door.*) But hark! this is probably my uncle, Sir Oliver: retire to that room; we'll consult farther when he's gone.

Lady Sneerwell. Well! but if *he* should find you out too—

Joseph Surface. Oh, I have no fear of that. Sir Peter will hold his tongue for his own credit's sake—and you may depend on't I shall soon discover Sir Oliver's weak side!

Lady Sneerwell. I have no diffidence of your abilities—only be constant to one roguery at a time. (Exit.)

Joseph Surface. I will, I will! So! 'tis confounded hard, after such bad fortune, to be baited by one's confederate in evil. Well, at all events, my character is so much better than Charles's, that I certainly—hey!—what!—this is not *Sir Oliver*, but old *Stanley* again! Plague on't! that he should return to tease me just now! We shall have Sir Oliver come and find him here—and—

Enter SIR OLIVER SURFACE.

Gad's life, Mr. Stanley, why have you come back to plague me just at this time? You must not stay now, upon my word.

Sir Oliver. Sir, I hear your uncle Oliver is expected here, and though he has been so penurious to *you*, I'll try what he'll do for *me*.

Joseph Surface. Sir, 'tis impossible for you to stay now, so I must beg—Come any other time, and I promise you, you shall be assisted.

Sir Oliver. No: Sir Oliver and I must be acquainted.

Joseph Surface. Zounds, sir! then I insist on your quitting the room directly.

Sir Oliver. Nay, sir!

Joseph Surface. Sir, I insist on't!—Here, William! show this gentleman out.

Since you compel me, sir—not one moment—this is such insolence!

(*Going to push him out.*)

Enter CHARLES SURFACE.

Charles Surface. Heyday! what's the matter now? What the devil, have you got hold of my little broker here? Zounds, brother, don't hurt little Premium. What's the matter, my little fellow?

Joseph Surface. So! he has been with you, too, has he?

Charles Surface. To be sure he has! Why, 'tis as honest a little—But sure, Joseph, you have not been borrowing money too, have you?

Joseph Surface. Borrowing! no! But, brother, you know here we expect Sir Oliver every—

Charles Surface. O gad, that's true! Noll mustn't find the little broker here, to be sure.

Joseph Surface. Yet, Mr. Stanley insists—

Charles Surface. Stanley! why his name is *Premium*.

Joseph Surface. No, no, *Stanley*.

Charles Surface. No, no, *Premium*.

Joseph Surface. Well, no matter which—but—

Charles Surface. Aye, aye, Stanley or Premium, 'tis the same thing, as you say; for I suppose he goes by half a hundred names, besides A.B.'s³⁵ at the coffee-houses.

Joseph Surface. Death! here's Sir Oliver at the door. (*Knocking again.*)

Now I beg, Mr. Stanley—

Charles Surface. Aye, and I beg, Mr. Premium—

Sir Oliver. Gentlemen—

Joseph Surface. Sir, by heaven you shall go!

Charles Surface. Aye, out with him, certainly.

Sir Oliver. This violence—

Joseph Surface. 'Tis your own fault.

Charles Surface. Out with him, to be sure. (*Both forcing SIR OLIVER out.*)

Enter SIR PETER and LADY TEAZLE, MARIA, and ROWLEY.

35. A reference to appointments at the coffee-houses made under concealed names.

Sir Peter. My old friend, Sir Oliver—hey! What in the name of wonder!—
Here are dutiful nephews!—assault their uncle at the first visit!

Lady Teazle. Indeed, Sir Oliver, 'twas well we came in to rescue you.

Rowley. Truly it was; for I perceive, Sir Oliver, the character of old Stanley
was no protection to you.

Sir Oliver. Nor of Premium either: the necessities of the *former* could not
extort a shilling from *that* benevolent gentleman; and now, egad, I
stood a chance of faring worse than my ancestors, and being knocked
down without being bid for.

After a pause, JOSEPH and CHARLES turning to each other.

Joseph Surface. Charles!

Charles Surface. Joseph!

Joseph Surface. 'Tis now complete!

Charles Surface. Very!

Sir Oliver. Sir Peter, my friend, and Rowley too—look on that elder
nephew of mine. You know what he has already received from my
bounty; and you know also how gladly I would have regarded half
my fortune as held in trust for him—judge, then, my disappointment
in discovering him to be destitute of truth—charity—and gratitude!

Sir Peter. Sir Oliver, I should be more surprised at this declaration, if I
had not myself found him selfish, treacherous, and hypocritical!

Lady Teazle. And if the gentleman pleads not guilty to these, pray let him
call me to his character.

Sir Peter. Then, I believe, we need add no more. If he knows himself, he
will consider it as the most perfect punishment that he is known to
the world.

Charles Surface (aside). If they talk this way to *Honesty*, what will they
say to *me*, by and by?

(SIR PETER, LADY TEAZLE, and MARIA retire.)

Sir Oliver. As for that prodigal, his brother, there—

Charles Surface (aside). Aye, now comes my turn: the damned family
pictures will ruin me!

Joseph Surface. Sir Oliver!—uncle!—will you honour me with a hearing?

Charles Surface (aside). Now if Joseph would make one of his long
speeches, I might recollect myself a little.

Sir Oliver (to JOSEPH SURFACE). I suppose you would undertake to justify
yourself entirely?

Joseph Surface. I trust I could.

Sir Oliver. Pshaw!—Well, sir! and *you* (*to CHARLES*) could justify yourself too, I suppose?

Charles Surface. Not that I know of, Sir Oliver.

Sir Oliver. What! Little Premium has been let too much into the secret, I presume?

Charles Surface. True, sir; but they were family secrets, and should never be mentioned again, you know.

Rowley. Come, Sir Oliver, I know you cannot speak of Charles's follies with anger.

Sir Oliver. Odd's heart, no more I can—nor with gravity either. Sir Peter, do you know the rogue bargained with me for all his ancestors—sold me judges and generals by the foot—and maiden aunts as cheap as broken china.

Charles Surface. To be sure, Sir Oliver, I did make a little free with the family canvas, that's the truth on't. My ancestors may certainly rise in evidence against me, there's no denying it; but believe me sincere when I tell you—and upon my soul I would not say it if I was not—that if I do not appear mortified at the exposure of my follies, it is because I feel at this moment the warmest satisfaction in seeing you, my liberal benefactor.

Sir Oliver. Charles, I believe you. Give me your hand again; the ill-looking little fellow over the settee has made your peace.

Charles Surface. Then, sir, my gratitude to the original is still increased.

Lady Teazle (*pointing to MARIA*). Yet, I believe, Sir Oliver, here is one whom Charles is still more anxious to be reconciled to.

Sir Oliver. Oh, I have heard of his attachment there; and, with the young lady's pardon, if I construe right—that blush—

Sir Peter. Well, child, speak your sentiments.

Maria. Sir, I have little to say, but that I shall rejoice to hear that he is happy; for me, whatever claim I had to his affection, I willingly resign it to one who has a better title.

Charles Surface. How, Maria!

Sir Peter. Heyday! what's the mystery now? While he appeared an incorrigible rake, you would give your hand to no one else; and now that he is likely to reform, I warrant you won't have him.

Maria. His own heart—and Lady Sneerwell know the cause.

Charles Surface. Lady Sneerwell!

Joseph Surface. Brother, it is with great concern I am obliged to speak on this point, but my regard to justice compels me, and Lady Sneerwell's injuries can no longer be concealed. (*Goes to the door.*)

Enter LADY SNEERWELL.

Sir Peter. So! another French milliner! Egad, he has one in every room in the house, I suppose!

Lady Sneerwell. Ungrateful Charles! Well may you be surprised, and feel for the indelicate situation which your perfidy has forced me into.

Charles Surface. Pray, uncle, is this another plot of yours? For, as I have life, I don't understand it.

Joseph Surface. I believe, sir, there is but the evidence of one person more necessary to make it extremely clear.

Sir Peter. And that person, I imagine, is Mr. Snake.—Rowley, you were perfectly right to bring him with us, and pray let him appear.

Rowley. Walk in, Mr. Snake.

Enter SNAKE.

I thought his testimony might be wanted; however, it happens unluckily, that he comes to confront Lady Sneerwell, and not to support her.

Lady Sneerwell. Villain! Treacherous to me at last! (*Aside.*)—Speak, fellow, have you too conspired against me?

Snake. I beg your ladyship ten thousand pardons: you paid me extremely liberally for the lie in question; but I have unfortunately been offered double to speak the truth.

Sir Peter. Plot and counterplot, egad—I wish your ladyship joy of the success of your negotiation.

Lady Sneerwell. The torments of shame and disappointment on you all!

Lady Teazle. Hold, Lady Sneerwell—before you go, let me thank you for the trouble you and that gentleman have taken, in writing letters to me from Charles, and answering them yourself; and let me also request you to make my respects to the Scandalous College, of which you are president, and inform them, that Lady Teazle, licentiate, begs leave to return the diploma they granted her, as she leaves off practice, and kills characters no longer.

Lady Sneerwell. You too, madam!—provoking—insolent! May your husband live these fifty years! (*Exit.*)

Sir Peter. Oons! what a fury!

Lady Teazle. A malicious creature, indeed!

Sir Peter. Hey! not for her last wish?

Lady Teazle. Oh, no!

Sir Oliver. Well, sir, and what have you to say now?

Joseph Surface. Sir, I am so confounded, to find that Lady Sneerwell could be guilty of suborning Mr. Snake in this manner, to impose on us all, that I know not what to say; however, lest her revengeful spirit should prompt her to injure my brother, I had certainly better follow her directly. *(Exit.)*

Sir Peter. Moral to the last drop!

Sir Oliver. Aye, and marry her, Joseph, if you can.—Oil and vinegar, egad! you'll do very well together.

Rowley. I believe we have no more occasion for Mr. Snake at present.

Snake. Before I go, I beg pardon once for all, for whatever uneasiness I have been the humble instrument of causing to the parties present.

Sir Peter. Well, well, you have made atonement by a good deed at last.

Snake. But I must request of the company, that it shall never be known.

Sir Peter. Hey! what the plague! are you ashamed of having done a right thing once in your life?

Snake. Ah, sir—consider I live by the badness of my character—I have nothing but my infamy to depend on! and, if it were once known that I had been betrayed into an honest action, I should lose every friend I have in the world.

Sir Oliver. Well, well—we'll not traduce you by saying anything in your praise, never fear. *(Exit SNAKE.)*

Sir Peter. There's a precious rogue! yet that fellow is a writer and a critic!

Lady Teazle. See, Sir Oliver, there needs no persuasion now to reconcile your nephew and Maria. *(CHARLES and MARIA apart.)*

Sir Oliver. Aye, aye, that's as it should be, and, egad, we'll have the wedding to-morrow morning.

Charles Surface. Thank you, my dear uncle.

Sir Peter. What, you rogue! don't you ask the girl's consent first?

Charles Surface. Oh, I have done that a long time—above a minute ago—and she has looked yes.

Maria. For shame, Charles!—I protest, Sir Peter, there has not been a word—

Sir Oliver. Well, then, the fewer the better—may your love for each other never know abatement.

Sir Peter. And may you live as happily together as Lady Teazle and I—intend to do!

Charles Surface. Rowley, my old friend, I am sure you congratulate me; and I suspect that I owe you much.

Sir Oliver. You do, indeed, Charles.

Rowley. If my efforts to serve you had not succeeded you would have been in my debt for the attempt—but deserve to be happy—and you overpay me.

Sir Peter. Aye, honest Rowley always said you would reform.

Charles Surface. Why as to reforming, Sir Peter, I'll make no promises, and that I take to be a proof that I intend to set about it.—But here shall be my monitor—my gentle guide.—Ah! can I leave the virtuous path those eyes illumine?

Though thou, dear maid, shouldst waive thy *beauty's* sway,
Thou still must rule, because I *will* obey:
An humbled fugitive from Folly view,
No sanctuary near but *Love* and—*YOU*;

(*To the audience.*)

You can, indeed, each anxious fear remove,
For even *Scandal* dies, if *you* approve.

Henrik Ibsen

1828–1906

The Norwegian poet and dramatist Henrik Johan Ibsen was born at Skien, March 20, 1828. His father, Knud Henriksen Ibsen, was a merchant whose business failed when Henrik was eight years old.

In 1844 the boy left home to be apprenticed to a druggist in the small town of Grimstad. He hated the work, and spent his spare time writing poetry and reading. He wrote his first play, *Cataline*, in the winter of 1848–49. He left Grimstad for Christiania (Oslo) in 1850 to begin his literary career. He worked as a journalist, then was appointed assistant stage manager at a theater in Bergen, where he served until 1857. In that year he was appointed director of the National Theater in Christiania.

During these years Ibsen gained experience in the theater and, at the same time, became interested in social questions. He continued to write plays, into which he began to interject psychological analysis. He took many of his themes from old Norwegian sagas and folk ballads.

Ibsen applied for a writer's pension but was denied it, and in 1864 he went to Italy. There he wrote his first masterpieces, *Brand* (1866) and *Peer Gynt* (1867). From this time on his fame was assured. The government finally granted him a poet's pension, and he no longer had to fear poverty. After living for a while in Germany,

Notes from the artist: “The portrait of Ibsen is executed in a decorative technique suggested by Nordic folk art of the sixteenth century. The scene below is from the story of Peer Gynt, a folk tale used by Ibsen in one of his early plays.”

Henrik Ibsen.



André Sten



he returned in 1891 to Christiania, where he died on May 23, 1906.

Ibsen was one of the most influential dramatists of our time. He brought realism to the stage, and dealt with controversial social and philosophical questions. His work earned for him the reputation of "father of modern drama." Post-Ibsen theater throughout Europe was radically different from what it had been before. George Bernard Shaw, to name only one playwright, was profoundly affected by Ibsen.

Through all Ibsen's work runs the thread of one great idea—the supreme importance of the individual. He saw the individual oppressed, and threatened, by many forms of tyranny; and he spent his dramatic strength protesting all forms of despotism. That he proposed no ideal system of government to obviate tyranny shows only that he was an artist, not a politician. That his shout of protest is still valid is proved by the fact that it rings as true today, in any part of the world, as it did in nineteenth-century Norway.

Most people would agree with Ibsen that tyranny is evil; but not everyone recognizes as plainly as he did its many forms. People customarily think of tyranny as the rule by force of one man over an unwilling populace. Ibsen, however, saw and abhorred another form of tyranny as well—that of the majority.

Ibsen was an eloquent, though by no means the first, spokesman for this point of view. Madison in *The Federalist* included the accumulation of power by the "many" in his definition of tyranny; John Stuart Mill and Tocqueville were both concerned with the tyranny of the majority.

In Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*, the hero, Dr. Stockmann, struggles against the "compact majority" which insists on imposing its will on him. The majority, in his town, prefers to live a lie rather than sacrifice its own interest.

By the end of the play, all of the doctor's supporters have deserted him, and he has failed in his efforts to have the germ-filled baths of the town condemned. What is more, Ibsen appears to portray Dr. Stockmann as a sort of modern-day Don Quixote. The doctor is faintly ridiculous in his ponderous statements and in his naïve certainty that he will be acclaimed a hero for taking away the town's source of income. And his determination, at the end of the play, to

create a new breed of men by educating ignorant street urchins seems foolish.

Perhaps this determination is not so much foolish as it is improbable of success. It appears to be Ibsen's way of saying that idealism alone has little chance to defeat the tyranny of the masses.

Though Ibsen is thus proposing no practical solution—solutions, in fact, are not his business—he may be pointing the way to the only effective defense against tyranny of any kind. "The strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone," says Dr. Stockmann—these are his last words. The lone man standing, with justice on his side, against the tyrant is a familiar, and powerful, figure in drama. But he occurs in real life, too. He often suffers personal defeat, even death. But his heroic action does not die with him. It endures and makes life more just and livable for the rest of us. Idealism, instead of being foolish and impractical, may in the end be the *only* practical course.

An Enemy of the People

CAST OF CHARACTERS

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN, *Medical Officer
of the Municipal Baths.*

MRS. STOCKMANN, *his wife.*

PETRA, *their daughter, a teacher.*

EJLIF } *their sons (aged 13 and 10 respectively).*
MORTEN }

PETER STOCKMANN, *the Doctor's elder brother;
Mayor of the Town and Chief Constable,
Chairman of the Baths' Committee, etc., etc.*

MORTEN KIIL, *a tanner (Mrs. Stockmann's adoptive father).*

HOVSTAD, *editor of the "People's Messenger."*

BILLING, *sub-editor.*

CAPTAIN HORSTER.

ASLAKSEN, *a printer.*

*Men of various conditions and occupations,
some few women, and a troop
of schoolboys—the audience at a public meeting.*

The action takes place in a coast town in southern Norway.

ACT I

SCENE. DR. STOCKMANN's sitting room. It is evening. The room is plainly but neatly appointed and furnished. In the right-hand wall are two doors; the farther leads out to the hall, the nearer to the doctors study. In the left-hand wall, opposite the door leading to the hall, is a door leading to the other rooms occupied by the family. In the middle of the same wall stands the stove, and, further forward, a couch with a looking glass hanging over it and an oval table in front of it. On the table, a lighted lamp, with a lamp shade. At the back of the room, an open door leads to the dining room. BILLING is seen sitting at the dining table, on which a lamp is burning. He has a napkin tucked under his chin, and MRS. STOCKMANN is standing by the table handing him a large plateful of roast beef. The other places at the table are empty, and the table somewhat in disorder, a meal having evidently recently been finished.

Mrs. Stockmann. You see, if you come an hour late, Mr. Billing, you have to put up with cold meat.

Billing (as he eats). It is uncommonly good, thank you—remarkably good.

Mrs. Stockmann. My husband makes such a point of having his meals punctually, you know—

Billing. That doesn't affect me a bit. Indeed, I almost think I enjoy a meal all the better when I can sit down and eat all by myself and undisturbed.

Mrs. Stockmann. Oh well, as long as you are enjoying it—. (*Turns to the hall door, listening.*) I expect that is Mr. Hovstad coming too.

Billing. Very likely.

PETER STOCKMANN comes in. He wears an overcoat and his official hat, and carries a stick.

Peter Stockmann. Good evening, Katherine.

Mrs. Stockmann (coming forward into the sitting room). Ah, good evening—is it you? How good of you to come up and see us!

Peter Stockmann. I happened to be passing, and so—(*looks into the dining room*). But you have company with you, I see.

Mrs. Stockmann (a little embarrassed). Oh, no—it was quite by chance

he came in. (*Hurriedly.*) Won't you come in and have something, too?

Peter Stockmann. I! No, thank you. Good gracious—hot meat at night! Not with my digestion.

Mrs. Stockmann. Oh, but just once in a way—

Peter Stockmann. No, no, my dear lady; I stick to my tea and bread and butter. It is much more wholesome in the long run—and a little more economical, too.

Mrs. Stockmann (smiling). Now you mustn't think that Thomas and I are spendthrifts.

Peter Stockmann. Not you, my dear; I would never think that of you. (*Points to the DOCTOR'S study.*) Is he not at home?

Mrs. Stockmann. No, he went out for a little turn after supper—he and the boys.

Peter Stockmann. I doubt if that is a wise thing to do. (*Listens.*) I fancy I hear him coming now.

Mrs. Stockmann. No, I don't think it is he. (*A knock is heard at the door.*) Come in! (*HOVSTAD comes in from the hall.*) Oh, it is you, Mr. Hovstad!

Hovstad. Yes, I hope you will forgive me, but I was delayed at the printer's. Good evening, Mr. Mayor.

Peter Stockmann (bowing a little distantly). Good evening. You have come on business, no doubt.

Hovstad. Partly. It's about an article for the paper.

Peter Stockmann. So I imagined. I hear my brother has become a prolific contributor to the "People's Messenger."

Hovstad. Yes, he is good enough to write in the "People's Messenger" when he has any home truths to tell.

Mrs. Stockmann (to HOVSTAD). But won't you—? (*Points to the dining room.*)

Peter Stockmann. Quite so, quite so. I don't blame him in the least, as a writer, for addressing himself to the quarters where he will find the readiest sympathy. And, besides that, I personally have no reason to bear any ill will to your paper, Mr. Hovstad.

Hovstad. I quite agree with you.

Peter Stockmann. Taking one thing with another, there is an excellent spirit of toleration in the town—an admirable municipal spirit. And it all springs from the fact of our having a great common interest to unite us—an interest that is in an equally high degree the concern of every right-minded citizen—

Hovstad. The Baths, yes.

Peter Stockmann. Exactly—our fine, new, handsome Baths. Mark my words, Mr. Hovstad—the Baths will become the focus of our municipal life! Not a doubt of it!

Mrs. Stockmann. That is just what Thomas says.

Peter Stockmann. Think how extraordinarily the place has developed within the last year or two! Money has been flowing in, and there is some life and some business doing in the town. Houses and landed property are rising in value every day.

Hovstad. And unemployment is diminishing.

Peter Stockmann. Yes, that is another thing. The burden of the poor rates has been lightened, to the great relief of the propertied classes; and that relief will be even greater if only we get a really good summer this year, and lots of visitors—plenty of invalids, who will make the Baths talked about.

Hovstad. And there is a good prospect of that, I hear.

Peter Stockmann. It looks very promising. Inquiries about apartments and that sort of thing are reaching us every day.

Hovstad. Well, the doctor's article will come in very suitably.

Peter Stockmann. Has he been writing something just lately?

Hovstad. This is something he wrote in the winter; a recommendation of the Baths—an account of the excellent sanitary conditions here. But I held the article over, temporarily.

Peter Stockmann. Ah—some little difficulty about it, I suppose?

Hovstad. No, not at all; I thought it would be better to wait till the spring, because it is just at this time that people begin to think seriously about their summer quarters.

Peter Stockmann. Quite right; you were perfectly right, Mr. Hovstad.

Hovstad. Yes, Thomas is really indefatigable when it is a question of the Baths.

Peter Stockmann. Well—remember, he is the Medical Officer to the Baths.

Hovstad. Yes, and what is more, they owe their existence to him.

Peter Stockmann. To him? Indeed! It is true I have heard from time to time that some people are of that opinion. At the same time I must say I imagined that I took a modest part in the enterprise.

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, that is what Thomas is always saying.

Hovstad. But who denies it, Mr. Stockmann? You set the thing going and made a practical concern of it; we all know that. I only meant that the idea of it came first from the doctor.

Peter Stockmann. Oh, ideas—yes! My brother has had plenty of them in

his time—unfortunately. But when it is a question of putting an idea into practical shape, you have to apply to a man of different mettle, Mr. Hovstad.

And I certainly should have thought that in this house at least—

Mrs. Stockmann. My dear Peter—

Hovstad. How can you think that—?

Mrs. Stockmann. Won't you go in and have something, Mr. Hovstad? My husband is sure to be back directly.

Hovstad. Thank you, perhaps just a morsel. (*Goes into the dining room.*)

Peter Stockmann (lowering his voice a little). It is a curious thing that these farmers' sons never seem to lose their want of tact.

Mrs. Stockmann. Surely it is not worth bothering about! Cannot you and Thomas share the credit as brothers?

Peter Stockmann. I should have thought so; but apparently some people are not satisfied with a share.

Mrs. Stockmann. What nonsense! You and Thomas get on so capitally together. (*Listens.*) There he is at last, I think. (*Goes out and opens the door leading to the hall.*)

Dr. Stockmann (laughing and talking outside). Look here—here is another guest for you, Katherine. Isn't that jolly! Come in, Captain Horster; hang your coat up on this peg. Ah, you don't wear an overcoat. Just think, Katherine; I met him in the street and could hardly persuade him to come up! (*CAPTAIN HORSTER comes into the room and greets MRS. STOCKMANN. He is followed by DR. STOCKMANN.*) Come along in, boys. They are ravenously hungry again, you know. Come along, Captain Horster; you must have a slice of beef. (*Pushes HORSTER into the dining room. EJLIF and MORTEN go in after them.*)

Mrs. Stockmann. But, Thomas, don't you see—?

Dr. Stockmann (turning in the doorway). Oh, is it you, Peter? (*Shakes hands with him.*) Now that is very delightful.

Peter Stockmann. Unfortunately I must go in a moment—

Dr. Stockmann. Rubbish! There is some toddy just coming in. You haven't forgotten the toddy, Katherine?

Mrs. Stockmann. Of course not; the water is boiling now. (*Goes into the dining room.*)

Peter Stockmann. Toddy too!

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, sit down and we will have it comfortably.

Peter Stockmann. Thanks, I never care about an evening's drinking.

Dr. Stockmann. But this isn't an evening's drinking.

Peter Stockmann. It seems to me—. (*Looks towards the dining room.*) It is extraordinary how they can put away all that food.

Dr. Stockmann (rubbing his hands). Yes, isn't it splendid to see young people eat? They have always got an appetite, you know! That's as it should be. Lots of food—to build up their strength! They are the people who are going to stir up the fermenting forces of the future, Peter.

Peter Stockmann. May I ask what they will find here to "stir up," as you put it?

Dr. Stockmann. Ah, you must ask the young people that—when the time comes. We shan't be able to see it, of course. That stands to reason—two old fogies, like us—

Peter Stockmann. Really, really! I must say that is an extremely odd expression to—

Dr. Stockmann. Oh, you mustn't take me too literally, Peter. I am so heartily happy and contented, you know. I think it is such an extraordinary piece of good fortune to be in the middle of all this growing, germinating life. It is a splendid time to live in! It is as if a whole new world were being created around one.

Peter Stockmann. Do you really think so?

Dr. Stockmann. Ah, naturally you can't appreciate it as keenly as I. You have lived all your life in these surroundings, and your impressions have got blunted. But I, who have been buried all these years in my little corner up north, almost without ever seeing a stranger who might bring new ideas with him—well, in my case it has just the same effect as if I had been transported into the middle of a crowded city.

Peter Stockmann. Oh, a city—!

Dr. Stockmann. I know, I know; it is all cramped enough here, compared with many other places. But there is life here—there is promise—there are innumerable things to work for and fight for; and that is the main thing. (*Calls.*) Katherine, hasn't the postman been here?

Mrs. Stockmann (from the dining room). No.

Dr. Stockmann. And then to be comfortably off, Peter! That is something one learns to value, when one has been on the brink of starvation, as we have.

Peter Stockmann. Oh, surely—

Dr. Stockmann. Indeed I can assure you we have often been very hard put to it, up there. And now to be able to live like a lord! Today, for instance, we had roast beef for dinner—and, what is more, for supper too. Won't you come and have a little bit? Or let me show it you, at any rate? Come here—

Peter Stockmann. No, no—not for worlds!

Dr. Stockmann. Well, but just come here then. Do you see, we have got a table cover?

Peter Stockmann. Yes, I noticed it.

Dr. Stockmann. And we have got a lamp shade too. Do you see? All out of Katherine's savings! It makes the room so cosy. Don't you think so? Just stand here for moment—no, no, not there—just here, that's it! Look now, when you get the light on it altogether—I really think it looks very nice, doesn't it?

Peter Stockmann. Oh, if you can afford luxuries of this kind—

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, I can afford it now. Katherine tells me I earn almost as much as we spend.

Peter Stockmann. Almost—yes!

Dr. Stockmann. But a scientific man must live in a little bit of style. I am quite sure an ordinary civil servant spends more in a year than I do.

Peter Stockmann. I daresay. A civil servant—a man in a well-paid position—

Dr. Stockmann. Well, any ordinary merchant, then! A man in that position spends two or three times as much as—

Peter Stockmann. It just depends on circumstances.

Dr. Stockmann. At all events I assure you I don't waste money unprofitably. But I can't find it in my heart to deny myself the pleasure of entertaining my friends. I need that sort of thing, you know. I have lived for so long shut out of it all, that it is a necessity of life to me to mix with young, eager, ambitious men, men of liberal and active minds; and that describes every one of those fellows who are enjoying their supper in there. I wish you knew more of Hovstad—

Peter Stockmann. By the way, Hovstad was telling me he was going to print another article of yours.

Dr. Stockmann. An article of mine?

Peter Stockmann. Yes, about the Baths. An article you wrote in the winter.

Dr. Stockmann. Oh, that one! No, I don't intend that to appear just for the present.

Peter Stockmann. Why not? It seems to me that this would be the most opportune moment.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, very likely—under normal conditions. (*Crosses the room.*)

Peter Stockmann (following him with his eyes). Is there anything abnormal about the present conditions?

Dr. Stockmann (standing still). To tell you the truth, Peter, I can't say just at this moment—at all events not tonight. There may be much that is very abnormal about the present conditions—and it is possi-

ble there may be nothing abnormal about them at all. It is quite possible it may be merely my imagination.

Peter Stockmann. I must say it all sounds most mysterious. Is there something going on that I am to be kept in ignorance of? I should have imagined that I, as Chairman of the governing body of the Baths—

Dr. Stockmann. And I should have imagined that I—. Oh, come, don't let us fly out at one another, Peter.

Peter Stockmann. Heaven forbid! I am not in the habit of flying out at people, as you call it. But I am entitled to request most emphatically that all arrangements shall be made in a businesslike manner, through the proper channels, and shall be dealt with by the legally constituted authorities. I can allow no going behind our backs by any roundabout means.

Dr. Stockmann. Have I ever at any time tried to go behind your backs!

Peter Stockmann. You have an ingrained tendency to take your own way, at all events; and that is almost equally inadmissible in a wellordered community. The individual ought undoubtedly to acquiesce in subordinating himself to the community—or, to speak more accurately, to the authorities who have the care of the community's welfare.

Dr. Stockmann. Very likely. But what the deuce has all this got to do with me?

Peter Stockmann. That is exactly what you never appear to be willing to learn, my dear Thomas. But, mark my words, some day you will have to suffer for it—sooner or later. Now I have told you. Good-by.

Dr. Stockmann. Have you taken leave of your senses? You are on the wrong scent altogether.

Peter Stockmann. I am not usually that. You must excuse me now if I—(*calls into the dining room*). Good night, Katherine. Good night, gentlemen. (*Goes out.*)

Mrs. Stockmann (*coming from the dining room*). Has he gone?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, and in such a bad temper.

Mrs. Stockmann. But, dear Thomas, what have you been doing to him again?

Dr. Stockmann. Nothing at all. And, anyhow, he can't oblige me to make my report before the proper time.

Mrs. Stockmann. What have you got to make a report to him about?

Dr. Stockmann. Hm! Leave that to me, Katherine. It is an extraordinary thing that the postman doesn't come.

HOVSTAD, BILLING and HORSTER have got up from the table and come into the sitting room. EJLIF and MORTEN come in after them.

Billing (*stretching himself*). Ah!—one feels a new man after a meal like that.

Hovstad. The mayor wasn't in a very sweet temper tonight, then.

Dr. Stockmann. It is his stomach; he has a wretched digestion.

Hovstad. I rather think it was us two of the "People's Messenger" that he couldn't digest.

Mrs. Stockmann. I thought you came out of it pretty well with him.

Hovstad. Oh yes; but it isn't anything more than a sort of truce.

Billing. That is just what it is! That word sums up the situation.

Dr. Stockmann. We must remember that Peter is a lonely man, poor chap.

He has no home comforts of any kind; nothing but everlasting business. And all that infernal weak tea wash that he pours into himself! Now then, my boys, bring chairs up to the table. Aren't we going to have that toddy, Katherine?

Mrs. Stockmann (*going into the dining room*). I am just getting it.

Dr. Stockmann. Sit down here on the couch beside me, Captain Horster.

We so seldom see you. Please sit down, my friends. (*They sit down at the table. MRS. STOCKMANN brings a tray, with a spirit lamp, glasses, bottles, etc., upon it.*)

Mrs. Stockmann. There you are! This is arrack, and this is rum, and this one is the brandy. Now every one must help himself.

Dr. Stockmann (*taking a glass*). We will. (*They all mix themselves some toddy.*) And let us have the cigars. Ejlf, you know where the box is. And you, Morten, can fetch my pipe. (*The two boys go into the room on the right.*) I have a suspicion that Ejlf pockets a cigar now and then!—but I take no notice of it. (*Calls out.*) And my smoking cap too, Morten. Katherine, you can tell him where I left it. Ah, he has got it. (*The boys bring the various things.*) Now, my friends. I stick to my pipe, you know. This one has seen plenty of bad weather with me up north. (*Touches glasses with them.*) Your good health! Ah, it is good to be sitting snug and warm here.

Mrs. Stockmann (*who sits knitting*). Do you sail soon, Captain Horster?

Horster. I expect to be ready to sail next week.

Mrs. Stockmann. I suppose you are going to America?

Horster. Yes, that is the plan.

Mrs. Stockmann. Then you won't be able to take part in the coming election.

Horster. Is there going to be an election?

Billing. Didn't you know?

Horster. No, I don't mix myself up with those things.

Billing. But do you not take an interest in public affairs?

Horster. No, I don't know anything about politics.

Billing. All the same, one ought to vote, at any rate.

Horster. Even if one doesn't know anything about what is going on?

Billing. Doesn't know! What do you mean by that? A community is like a ship; every one ought to be prepared to take the helm.

Horster. Maybe that is all very well on shore; but on board ship it wouldn't work.

Hovstad. It is astonishing how little most sailors care about what goes on on shore.

Billing. Very extraordinary.

Dr. Stockmann. Sailors are like birds of passage; they feel equally at home in any latitude. And that is only an additional reason for our being all the more keen, Hovstad. Is there to be anything of public interest in tomorrow's "Messenger"?

Hovstad. Nothing about municipal affairs. But the day after tomorrow I was thinking of printing your article—

Dr. Stockmann. Ah, devil take it—my article! Look here, that must wait a bit.

Hovstad. Really? We had just got convenient space for it, and I thought it was just the opportune moment—

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, yes, very likely you are right; but it must wait all the same. I will explain to you later.

PETRA comes in from the hall, in hat and cloak and with a bundle of exercise books under her arm.

Petra. Good evening.

Dr. Stockmann. Good evening, Petra; come along.

Mutual greetings; PETRA takes off her things and puts them down on a chair by the door.

Petra. And you have all been sitting here enjoying yourselves, while I have been out slaving!

Dr. Stockmann. Well, come and enjoy yourself too!

Billing. May I mix a glass for you?

Petra (coming to the table). Thanks, I would rather do it; you always mix it too strong. But I forgot, father—I have a letter for you. (*Goes to the chair where she has laid her things.*)

Dr. Stockmann. A letter? From whom?

Petra (*looking in her coat pocket*). The postman gave it to me just as I was going out—

Dr. Stockmann (*getting up and going to her*). And you only give it to me now!

Petra. I really had not time to run up again. There it is!

Dr. Stockmann (*seizing the letter*). Let's see, let's see, child! (*Looks at the address.*) Yes, that's all right!

Mrs. Stockmann. Is it the one you have been expecting so anxiously, Thomas?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, it is. I must go to my room now and—. Where shall I get a light, Katherine? Is there no lamp in my room again?

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, your lamp is already lit on your desk.

Dr. Stockmann. Good, good. Excuse me for a moment—(*Goes into his study.*)

Petra. What do you suppose it is, mother?

Mrs. Stockmann. I don't know; for the last day or two he has always been asking if the postman has not been.

Billing. Probably some country patient.

Petra. Poor old dad!—he will overwork himself soon. (*Mixes a glass for herself.*) There, that will taste good!

Hovstad. Have you been teaching in the evening school again today?

Petra (*sipping from her glass*). Two hours.

Billing. And four hours of school in the morning—

Petra. Five hours.

Mrs. Stockmann. And you have still got exercises to correct, I see.

Petra. A whole heap, yes.

Horster. You are pretty full up with work too, it seems to me.

Petra. Yes—but that is good. One is so delightfully tired after it.

Billing. Do you like that?

Petra. Yes, because one sleeps so well, then.

Morten. You must be dreadfully wicked, Petra.

Petra. Wicked?

Morten. Yes, because you work so much. Mr. Rörlund says work is a punishment for our sins.

Ejlif. Pooh, what a duffer you are, to believe a thing like that!

Mrs. Stockmann. Come, come, Ejlif!

Billing (*laughing*). That's capital!

Hovstad. Don't you want to work as hard as that, Morten?

Morten. No, indeed I don't.

Hovstad. What do you want to be, then?

Morten. I should like best to be a Viking.

Ejlif. You would have to be a pagan then.

Morten. Well, I could become a pagan, couldn't I?

Billing. I agree with you, Morten! My sentiments, exactly.

Mrs. Stockmann (*signaling to him*). I am sure that is not true, Mr. Billing.

Billing. Yes, I swear it is! I am a pagan, and I am proud of it. Believe me, before long we shall all be pagans.

Morten. And then shall be allowed to do anything we like?

Billing. Well, you see, Morten—.

Mrs. Stockmann. You must go to your room now, boys; I am sure you have some lessons to learn for tomorrow.

Ejlif. I should like so much to stay a little longer—

Mrs. Stockmann. No, no; away you go, both of you.

The boys say good night and go into the room on the left.

Hovstad. Do you really think it can do the boys any harm to hear such things?

Mrs. Stockmann. I don't know, but I don't like it.

Petra. But you know, mother, I think you really are wrong about it.

Mrs. Stockmann. Maybe, but I don't like it—not in our own home.

Petra. There is so much falsehood both at home and at school. At home one must not speak, and at school we have to stand and tell lies to the children.

Horster. Tell lies?

Petra. Yes, don't you suppose we have to teach them all sorts of things that we don't believe?

Billing. That is perfectly true.

Petra. If only I had the means I would start a school of my own, and it would be conducted on very different lines.

Billing. Oh, bother the means—!

Horster. Well, if you are thinking of that, Miss Stockmann, I shall be delighted to provide you with a schoolroom. The great big old house my father left me is standing almost empty; there is an immense dining room downstairs—

Petra (*laughing*). Thank you very much; but I am afraid nothing will come of it.

Hovstad. No, Miss Petra is much more likely to take to journalism, I expect. By the way, have you had time to do anything with that English story you promised to translate for us?

Petra. No, not yet; but you shall have it in good time.

DR. STOCKMANN *comes in from his room with an open letter in his hand.*

Dr. Stockmann (waving the letter). Well, now the town will have something new to talk about, I can tell you!

Billing. Something new?

Mrs. Stockmann. What is this?

Dr. Stockmann. A great discovery, Katherine.

Hovstad. Really?

Mrs. Stockmann. A discovery of yours?

Dr. Stockmann. A discovery of mine. (*Walks up and down.*) Just let them come saying, as usual, that it is all fancy and a crazy man's imagination! But they will be careful what they say this time, I can tell you!

Petra. But, father, tell us what it is.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, yes—only give me time, and you shall know all about it. If only I had Peter here now! It just shows how we men can go about forming our judgments, when in reality we are as blind as any moles—

Hovstad. What are you driving at, Doctor?

Dr. Stockmann (standing still by the table). Isn't it the universal opinion that our town is a healthy spot?

Hovstad. Certainly.

Dr. Stockmann. Quite an unusually healthy spot, in fact—a place that deserves to be recommended in the warmest possible manner either for invalids or for people who are well—

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, but my dear Thomas—

Dr. Stockmann. And we have been recommending it and praising it—I have written and written, both in the "Messenger" and in pamphlets—

Hovstad. Well, what then?

Dr. Stockmann. And the Baths—we have called them the "main artery of the town's lifeblood," the "nerve center of our town," and the devil knows what else—

Billing. "The town's pulsating heart" was the expression I once used on an important occasion—

Dr. Stockmann. Quite so. Well, do you know what they really are, these great, splendid, much-praised Baths, that have cost so much money—do you know what they are?

Hovstad. No, what are they?

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, what are they?

Dr. Stockmann. The whole place is a pesthouse!

Petra. The Baths, father?

Mrs. Stockmann (at the same time). Our Baths!

Hovstad. But, Doctor—

Billing. Absolutely incredible!

Dr. Stockmann. The whole Bath establishment is a whitened, poisoned sepulcher, I tell you—the gravest possible danger to the public health!

All the nastiness up at Mölledal, all that stinking filth, is infecting the water in the conduit pipes leading to the reservoir; and the same cursed, filthy poison oozes out on the shore too—

Horster. Where the bathing place is?

Dr. Stockmann. Just there.

Hovstad. How do you come to be so certain of all this, Doctor?

Dr. Stockmann. I have investigated the matter most conscientiously. For a long time past I have suspected something of the kind. Last year we had some very strange cases of illness among the visitors—typhoid cases, and cases of gastric fever—

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, that is quite true.

Dr. Stockmann. At the time, we supposed the visitors had been infected before they came; but later on, in the winter, I began to have a different opinion; and so I set myself to examine the water, as well as I could.

Mrs. Stockmann. Then that is what you have been so busy with?

Dr. Stockmann. Indeed I have been busy, Katherine. But here I had none of the necessary scientific apparatus; so I sent samples, both of the drinking water and of the sea water, up to the University, to have an accurate analysis made by a chemist.

Hovstad. And have you got that?

Dr. Stockmann (showing him the letter). Here it is! It proves the presence of decomposing organic matter in the water—it is full of Infusoria. The water is absolutely dangerous to use, either internally or externally.

Mrs. Stockmann. What a mercy you discovered it in time.

Dr. Stockmann. You may well say so.

Hovstad. And what do you propose to do now, Doctor?

Dr. Stockmann. To see the matter put right—naturally.

Hovstad. Can that be done?

Dr. Stockmann. It must be done. Otherwise the Baths will be absolutely

useless and wasted. But we need not anticipate that; I have a very clear idea what we shall have to do.

Mrs. Stockmann. But why have you kept this all so secret, dear?

Dr. Stockmann. Do you suppose I was going to run about the town gossiping about it, before I had absolute proof? No, thank you. I am not such a fool.

Petra. Still, you might have told us—

Dr. Stockmann. Not a living soul. But tomorrow you may run round to the old “Badger”—

Mrs. Stockmann. Oh, Thomas! Thomas!

Dr. Stockmann. Well, to your grandfather, then. The old boy will have something to be astonished at! I know he thinks I am cracked—and there are lots of other people think so too, I have noticed. But now these good folks shall see—they shall just see! (*Walks about, rubbing his hands.*) There will be a nice upset in the town, Katherine; you can’t imagine what it will be. All the conduit pipes will have to be relaid.

Hovstad (getting up). All the conduit pipes—?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, of course. The intake is too low down; it will have to be lifted to a position much higher up.

Petra. Then you were right after all.

Dr. Stockmann. Ah, you remember, Petra—I wrote opposing the plans before the work was begun. But at that time no one would listen to me. Well, I am going to let them have it, now! Of course I have prepared a report for the Baths Committee; I have had it ready for a week, and was only waiting for this to come. (*Shows the letter.*) Now it shall go off at once. (*Goes into his room and comes back with some papers.*) Look at that! Four closely written sheets!—and the letter shall go with them. Give me a bit of paper, Katherine—something to wrap them up in. That will do! Now give it to—to—(*stamps his foot*)—what the deuce is her name?—give it to the maid, and tell her to take it at once to the Mayor.

MRS. STOCKMANN takes the packet and goes out through the dining room.

Petra. What do you think uncle Peter will say, father?

Dr. Stockmann. What is there for him to say? I should think he would be very glad that such an important truth has been brought to light.

Hovstad. Will you let me print a short note about your discovery in the “Messenger”?

Dr. Stockmann. I shall be very much obliged if you will.

Hovstad. It is very desirable that the public should be informed of it without delay.

Dr. Stockmann. Certainly.

Mrs. Stockmann (coming back). She has just gone with it.

Billing. Upon my soul, Doctor, you are going to be the foremost man in the town!

Dr. Stockmann (walking about happily). Nonsense! As a matter of fact I have done nothing more than my duty. I have only made a lucky find—that's all. Still, all the same—

Billing. Hovstad, don't you think the town ought to give Dr. Stockmann some sort of testimonial?

Hovstad. I will suggest it, anyway.

Billing. And I will speak to Aslaksen about it.

Dr. Stockmann. No, my good friends, don't let us have any of that nonsense. I won't hear of anything of the kind. And if the Baths Committee should think of voting me an increase of salary, I will not accept it. Do you hear, Katherine?—I won't accept it.

Mrs. Stockmann. You are quite right, Thomas.

Petra (lifting her glass). Your health, father!

Hovstad and Billing. Your health, Doctor! Good health!

Horster (touches glasses with DR. STOCKMANN). I hope it will bring you nothing but good luck.

Dr. Stockmann. Thank you, thank you, my dear fellows! I feel tremendously happy! It is a splendid thing for a man to be able to feel that he has done a service to his native town and to his fellow citizens. Hurrah, Katherine!

He puts his arms round her and whirls her round and round, while she protests with laughing cries. They all laugh, clap their hands, and cheer the DOCTOR. The boys put their heads in at the door to see what is going on.

ACT II

SCENE. *The same. The door into the dining room is shut. It is morning. MRS. STOCKMANN, with a sealed letter in her hand, comes in from the dining room, goes to the door of the DOCTOR'S study, and peeps in.*

Mrs. Stockmann. Are you in, Thomas?

Dr. Stockmann (from within his room). Yes, I have just come in. (*Comes into the room.*) What is it?

Mrs. Stockmann. A letter from your brother.

Dr. Stockmann. Aha, let us see! (*Opens the letter and reads:*) "I return herewith the manuscript you sent me"—(*Reads on in a low murmur.*) Hm!—

Mrs. Stockmann. What does he say?

Dr. Stockmann (putting the papers in his pocket). Oh, he only writes that he will come up here himself about midday.

Mrs. Stockmann. Well, try and remember to be at home this time.

Dr. Stockmann. That will be all right; I have got through all my morning visits.

Mrs. Stockmann. I am extremely curious to know how he takes it.

Dr. Stockmann. You will see he won't like its having been I, and not he, that made the discovery.

Mrs. Stockmann. Aren't you a little nervous about that?

Dr. Stockmann. Oh, he really will be pleased enough, you know. But, at the same time, Peter is so confoundedly afraid of anyone's doing any service to the town except himself.

Mrs. Stockmann. I will tell you what, Thomas—you should be good natured, and share the credit of this with him. Couldn't you make out that it was he who set you on the scent of this discovery?

Dr. Stockmann. I am quite willing. If only I can get the thing set right. I—

MORTEN KIIL puts his head in through the door leading from the hall, looks round in an inquiring manner, and chuckles.

Morten Kiil (slyly). Is it—is it true?

Mrs. Stockmann (going to the door). Father!—is it you?

Dr. Stockmann. Ah, Mr. Kiil—good morning, good morning!

Mrs. Stockmann. But come along in.

Morten Kiil. If it is true, I will; if not, I am off.

Dr. Stockmann. If what is true?

Morten Kiil. This tale about the water supply. Is it true?

Dr. Stockmann. Certainly it is true. But how did you come to hear it?

Morten Kiil (coming in). Petra ran in on her way to the school—

Dr. Stockmann. Did she?

Morten Kiil. Yes; and she declares that—. I thought she was only making a fool of me, but it isn't like Petra to do that.

Dr. Stockmann. Of course not. How could you imagine such a thing!

Morten Kiil. Oh well, it is better never to trust anybody; you may find you have been made a fool of before you know where you are. But it is really true, all the same?

Dr. Stockmann. You can depend upon it that it is true. Won't you sit down? (*Settles him on the couch.*) Isn't it a real bit of luck for the town—

Morten Kiil (*suppressing his laughter*). A bit of luck for the town?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, that I made the discovery in good time.

Morten Kiil (*as before*). Yes, yes, yes!—But I should never have thought you the sort of man to pull your own brother's leg like this!

Dr. Stockmann. Pull his leg!

Mrs. Stockmann. Really, father dear—

Morten Kiil (*resting his hands and his chin on the handle of his stick and winking slyly at the DOCTOR*). Let me see, what was the story? Some kind of beast that had got into the water pipes, wasn't it?

Dr. Stockmann. Infusoria—yes.

Morten Kiil. And a lot of these beasts had got in, according to Petra—a tremendous lot.

Dr. Stockmann. Certainly; hundreds of thousands of them, probably.

Morten Kiil. But no one can see them—isn't that so?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes; you can't see them.

Morten Kiil (*with a quiet chuckle*). Damme—it's the finest story I have ever heard!

Dr. Stockmann. What do you mean?

Morten Kiil. But you will never get the Mayor to believe a thing like that.

Dr. Stockmann. We shall see.

Morten Kiil. Do you think he will be fool enough to—?

Dr. Stockmann. I hope the whole town will be fools enough.

Morten Kiil. The whole town! Well, it wouldn't be a bad thing. It would just serve them right, and teach them a lesson. They think themselves so much cleverer than we old fellows. They hounded me out of the council; they did, I tell you—they hounded me out. Now they shall pay for it. You pull their legs too, Thomas!

Dr. Stockmann. Really, I—

Morten Kiil. You pull their legs! (*Gets up.*) If you can work it so that the Mayor and his friends all swallow the same bait, I will give ten pounds to a charity—like a shot!

Dr. Stockmann. That is very kind of you.

Morten Kiil. Yes, I haven't got much money to throw away, I can tell you; but if you can work this, I will give five pounds to a charity at Christmas.

Hovstad comes in by the hall door.

Hovstad. Good morning! (*Stops.*) Oh, I beg your pardon—

Dr. Stockmann. Not at all; come in.

Morten Kiil (*with another chuckle*). Oho!—is he in this too?

Hovstad. What do you mean?

Dr. Stockmann. Certainly he is.

Morten Kiil. I might have known it! It must get into the papers. You know how to do it, Thomas! Set your wits to work. Now I must go.

Dr. Stockmann. Won't you stay a little while?

Morten Kiil. No, I must be off now. You keep up this game for all it is worth; you won't repent it, I'm damned if you will!

He goes out; MRS. STOCKMANN follows him into the hall.

Dr. Stockmann (*laughing*). Just imagine—the old chap doesn't believe a word of all this about the water supply.

Hovstad. Oh, that was it, then?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, that was what we were talking about. Perhaps it is the same thing that brings you here?

Hovstad. Yes, it is. Can you spare me a few minutes, Doctor?

Dr. Stockmann. As long as you like, my dear fellow.

Hovstad. Have you heard from the Mayor yet?

Dr. Stockmann. Not yet. He is coming here later.

Hovstad. I have given the matter a great deal of thought since last night.

Dr. Stockmann. Well?

Hovstad. From your point of view, as a doctor and a man of science, this affair of the water supply is an isolated matter. I mean, you do not realize that it involves a great many other things.

Dr. Stockmann. How do you mean? Let us sit down, my dear fellow. No, sit here on the couch. (*HOVSTAD sits down on the couch, DR. STOCKMANN on a chair on the other side of the table.*) Now then. You mean that—?

Hovstad. You said yesterday that the pollution of the water was due to impurities in the soil.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, unquestionably it is due to that poisonous morass up at Mölledal.

Hovstad. Begging your pardon, Doctor, I fancy it is due to quite another morass altogether.

Dr. Stockmann. What morass?

Hovstad. The morass that the whole life of our town is built on and is rotting in.

Dr. Stockmann. What the deuce are you driving at, Hovstad?

Hovstad. The whole of the town's interests have, little by little, got into the hands of a pack of officials.

Dr. Stockmann. Oh, come!—they are not all officials.

Hovstad. No, but those that are not officials are at any rate the officials' friends and adherents; it is the wealthy folk, the old families in the town, that have got us entirely in their hands.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, but after all they are men of ability and knowledge.

Hovstad. Did they show any ability or knowledge when they laid the conduit pipes where they are now?

Dr. Stockmann. No, of course that was a great piece of stupidity on their part. But that is going to be set right now.

Hovstad. Do you think that will be all such plain sailing?

Dr. Stockmann. Plain sailing or no, it has got to be done, anyway.

Hovstad. Yes, provided the press takes up the question.

Dr. Stockmann. I don't think that will be necessary, my dear fellow, I am certain my brother—

Hovstad. Excuse me, Doctor; I feel bound to tell you I am inclined to take the matter up.

Dr. Stockmann. In the paper?

Hovstad. Yes. When I took over the "People's Messenger" my idea was to break up this ring of self-opinionated old fossils who had got hold of all the influence.

Dr. Stockmann. But you know you told me yourself what the result had been; you nearly ruined your paper.

Hovstad. Yes, at the time we were obliged to climb down a peg or two, it is quite true; because there was a danger of the whole project of the Baths coming to nothing if they failed us. But now the scheme has been carried through, and we can dispense with these grand gentlemen.

Dr. Stockmann. Dispense with them, yes; but we owe them a great debt of gratitude.

Hovstad. That shall be recognized ungrudgingly. But a journalist of my democratic tendencies cannot let such an opportunity as this slip. The bubble of official infallibility must be pricked. This superstition must be destroyed, like any other.

Dr. Stockmann. I am whole heartedly with you in that, Mr. Hovstad; if it is a superstition, away with it!

Hovstad. I should be very reluctant to bring the Mayor into it, because he is your brother. But I am sure you will agree with me that truth should be the first consideration.

Dr. Stockmann. That goes without saying. (*With sudden emphasis.*) Yes, but—but—

Hovstad. You must not misjudge me. I am neither more self-interested nor more ambitious than most men.

Dr. Stockmann. My dear fellow—who suggests anything of the kind?

Hovstad. I am of humble origin, as you know; and that has given me opportunities of knowing what is the most crying need in the humbler ranks of life. It is that they should be allowed some part in the direction of public affairs, Doctor. That is what will develop their faculties and intelligence and self-respect—

Dr. Stockmann. I quite appreciate that.

Hovstad. Yes—and in my opinion a journalist incurs a heavy responsibility if he neglects a favorable opportunity of emancipating the masses—the humble and oppressed. I know well enough that in exalted circles I shall be called an agitator, and all that sort of thing; but they may call what they like. If only my conscience doesn't reproach me, then—

Dr. Stockmann. Quite right! Quite right, Mr. Hovstad. But all the same—devil take it! (*A knock is heard at the door.*) Come in!

ASLAKSEN appears at the door. *He is poorly but decently dressed, in black, with a slightly crumpled white neckcloth; he wears gloves and has a felt hat in his hand.*

Aslaksen (bowing). Excuse my taking the liberty, Doctor—

Dr. Stockmann (getting up). Ah, it is you, Aslaksen!

Aslaksen. Yes, Doctor.

Hovstad (standing up). Is it me you want, Aslaksen?

Aslaksen. No; I didn't know I should find you here. No, it was the Doctor I—

Dr. Stockmann. I am quite at your service. What is it?

Aslaksen. Is what I heard from Mr. Billing true, sir—that you mean to improve our water supply?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, for the Baths.

Aslaksen. Quite so, I understand. Well, I have come to say that I will back that up by every means in my power.

Hovstad (*to the DOCTOR*). You see!

Dr. Stockmann. I shall be very grateful to you, but—

Aslaksen. Because it may be no bad thing to have us small tradesmen at your back. We form, as it were, a compact majority in the town—if we choose. And it is always a good thing to have the majority with you, Doctor.

Dr. Stockmann. That is undeniably true; but I confess I don't see why such unusual precautions should be necessary in this case. It seems to me that such a plain, straightforward thing—

Aslaksen. Oh, it may be very desirable, all the same. I know our local authorities so well; officials are not generally very ready to act on proposals that come from other people. That is why I think it would not be at all amiss if we made a little demonstration.

Hovstad. That's right.

Dr. Stockmann. Demonstration, did you say? What on earth are you going to make a demonstration about?

Aslaksen. We shall proceed with the greatest moderation, Doctor.

Moderation is always my aim; it is the greatest virtue in a citizen—at least, I think so.

Dr. Stockmann. It is well known to be a characteristic of yours, Mr. Aslaksen.

Aslaksen. Yes, I think I may pride myself on that. And this matter of the water supply is of the greatest importance to us small tradesmen. The Baths promise to be a regular gold mine for the town. We shall all make our living out of them, especially those of us who are householders. That is why we will back up the project as strongly as possible. And as I am at present Chairman of the Householders' Association—

Dr. Stockmann. Yes—?

Aslaksen. And, what is more, local secretary of the Temperance Society—you know, sir, I suppose, that I am a worker in the temperance cause?

Dr. Stockmann. Of course, of course.

Aslaksen. Well, you can understand that I come into contact with a great many people. And as I have the reputation of a temperate and law-abiding citizen—like yourself Doctor—I have a certain influence in the town, a little bit of power, if I may be allowed to say so.

Dr. Stockmann. I know that quite well, Mr. Aslaksen.

Aslaksen. So you see it would be an easy matter for me to set on foot some testimonial, if necessary.

Dr. Stockmann. A testimonial?

Aslaksen. Yes, some kind of an address of thanks from the townsmen for your share in a matter of such importance to the community. I need scarcely say that it would have to be drawn up with the greatest regard to moderation, so as not to offend the authorities—who, after all, have the reins in their hands. If we pay strict attention to that, no one can take it amiss, I should think!

Hovstad. Well, and even supposing they didn't like it—

Aslaksen. No, no, no; there must be no discourtesy to the authorities, Mr. Hovstad. It is no use falling foul of those upon whom our welfare so closely depends. I have done that in my time, and no good ever comes of it. But no one can take exception to a reasonable and frank expression of a citizen's views.

Dr. Stockmann (shaking him by the hand). I can't tell you, dear Mr. Aslaksen, how extremely pleased I am to find such hearty support among my fellow citizens. I am delighted—delighted! Now, you will take a small glass of sherry, eh?

Aslaksen. No, thank you; I never drink alcohol of that kind.

Dr. Stockmann. Well, what do you say to a glass of beer, then?

Aslaksen. Nor that either, thank you, Doctor. I never drink anything as early as this. I am going into town now to talk this over with one or two householders, and prepare the ground.

Dr. Stockmann. It is tremendously kind of you, Mr. Aslaksen; but I really cannot understand the necessity for all these precautions. It seems to me that the thing should go of itself.

Aslaksen. The authorities are somewhat slow to move, Doctor. Far be it from me to seem to blame them—

Hovstad. We are going to stir them up in the paper tomorrow, Aslaksen.

Aslaksen. But not violently, I trust, Mr. Hovstad. Proceed with moderation, or you will do nothing with them. You may take my advice; I have gathered my experience in the school of life. Well, I must say good-by, Doctor. You know now that we small tradesmen are at your back at all events, like a solid wall. You have the compact majority on your side, Doctor.

Dr. Stockmann. I am very much obliged, dear Mr. Aslaksen. (*Shakes hands with him.*) Good-by, good-by.

Aslaksen. Are you going my way, towards the printing office, Mr. Hovstad?

Hovstad. I will come later; I have something to settle up first.

Aslaksen. Very well. (*Bows and goes out;* STOCKMANN follows him into the hall.)

Hovstad (as STOCKMANN comes in again). Well, what do you think of

that, Doctor? Don't you think it is high time we stirred a little life into all this slackness and vacillation and cowardice?

Dr. Stockmann. Are you referring to Aslaksen?

Hovstad. Yes, I am. He is one of those who are floundering in a bog-decent enough fellow though he may be, otherwise. And most of the people here are in just the same case—seesawing and edging first to one side and then to the other, so overcome with caution and scruple that they never dare to take any decided step.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, but Aslaksen seemed to me so thoroughly well intentioned.

Hovstad. There is one thing I esteem higher than that; and that is for a man to be self-reliant and sure of himself.

Dr. Stockmann. I think you are perfectly right there.

Hovstad. That is why I want to seize this opportunity, and try if I cannot manage to put a little virility into these well-intentioned people for once. The idol of Authority must be shattered in this town. This gross and inexcusable blunder about the water supply must be brought home to the mind of every municipal voter.

Dr. Stockmann. Very well; if you are of opinion that it is for the good of the community, so be it. But not until I have had a talk with my brother.

Hovstad. Anyway, I will get a leading article ready; and if the Mayor refuses to take the matter up—

Dr. Stockmann. How can you suppose such a thing possible?

Hovstad. It is conceivable. And in that case—

Dr. Stockmann. In that case I promise you—. Look here, in that case you may print my report—every word of it.

Hovstad. May I? Have I your word for it?

Dr. Stockmann (*giving him the manuscript*). Here it is; take it with you. It can do no harm for you to read it through, and you can give it me back later on.

Hovstad. Good, good! That is what I will do. And now good-by, Doctor.

Dr. Stockmann. Good-by, good-by. You will see everything will run quite smoothly, Mr. Hovstad—quite smoothly.

Hovstad. Hm!—we shall see. (*Bows and goes out.*)

Dr. Stockmann (*opens the dining room door and looks in*). Katherine! Oh, you are back, Petra?

Petra (*coming in*). Yes, I have just come from the school.

Mrs. Stockmann (*coming in*). Has he not been here yet?

Dr. Stockmann. Peter? No. But I have had a long talk with Hovstad. He is quite excited about my discovery. I find it has a much wider bear-

ing than I at first imagined. And he has put his paper at my disposal if necessity should arise.

Mrs. Stockmann. Do you think it will?

Dr. Stockmann. Not for a moment. But at all events it makes me feel proud to know that I have the liberal-minded independent press on my side. Yes, and—just imagine—I have had a visit from the Chairman of the Householders' Association!

Mrs. Stockmann. Oh! What did he want?

Dr. Stockmann. To offer me his support too. They will support me in a body if it should be necessary. Katherine—do you know what I have got behind me?

Mrs. Stockmann. Behind you? No, what have you got behind you?

Dr. Stockmann. The compact majority.

Mrs. Stockmann. Really? Is that a good thing for you, Thomas?

Dr. Stockmann. I should think it was a good thing. (*Walks up and down rubbing his hands.*) By Jove, it's a fine thing to feel this bond of brotherhood between oneself and one's fellow citizens!

Petra. And to be able to do so much that is good and useful, father!

Dr. Stockmann. And for one's own native town into the bargain, my child!

Mrs. Stockmann. That was a ring at the bell.

Dr. Stockmann. It must be he, then. (*A knock is heard at the door.*) Come in!

Peter Stockmann (comes in from the hall). Good morning.

Dr. Stockmann. Glad to see you, Peter!

Mrs. Stockmann. Good morning, Peter. How are you?

Peter Stockmann. So so, thank you. (*To DR. STOCKMANN.*) I received from you yesterday, after office hours, a report dealing with the condition of the water at the Baths.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes. Have you read it?

Peter Stockmann. Yes, I have.

Dr. Stockmann. And what have you to say to it?

Peter Stockmann (with a sidelong glance). Hm!—

Mrs. Stockmann. Come along, Petra. (*She and PETRA go into the room on the left.*)

Peter Stockmann (after a pause). Was it necessary to make all these investigations behind my back?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, because until I was absolutely certain about it—

Peter Stockmann. Then you mean that you are absolutely certain now?

Dr. Stockmann. Surely you are convinced of that.

Peter Stockmann. Is it your intention to bring this document before the Baths Committee as a sort of official communication?

Dr. Stockmann. Certainly. Something must be done in the matter—and that quickly.

Peter Stockmann. As usual, you employ violent expressions in your report. You say, among other things, that what we offer visitors in our Baths is a permanent supply of poison.

Dr. Stockmann. Well, can you describe it any other way, Peter! Just think—water that is poisonous, whether you drink it or bathe in it! And this we offer to the poor sick folk who come to us trustfully and pay us at an exorbitant rate to be made well again!

Peter Stockmann. And your reasoning leads you to this conclusion, that we must build a sewer to draw off the alleged impurities from Mölledal and must relay the water conduits.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes. Do you see any other way out of it? I don't.

Peter Stockmann. I made a pretext this morning to go and see the town engineer, and, as if only half seriously, broached the subject of these proposals as a thing we might perhaps have to take under consideration some time later on.

Dr. Stockmann. Some time later on!

Peter Stockmann. He smiled at what he considered to be my extravagance, naturally. Have you taken the trouble to consider what your proposed alterations would cost? According to the information I obtained, the expenses would probably mount up to fifteen or twenty thousand pounds.

Dr. Stockmann. Would it cost so much?

Peter Stockmann. Yes; and the worst part of it would be that the work would take at least two years.

Dr. Stockmann. Two years? Two whole years?

Peter Stockmann. At least. And what are we to do with the Baths in the meantime? Close them? Indeed we should be obliged to. And do you suppose anyone would come near the place after it had got about that the water was dangerous?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, but, Peter, that is what it is.

Peter Stockmann. And all this at this juncture—just as the Baths are beginning to be known. There are other towns in the neighborhood with qualifications to attract visitors for bathing purposes. Don't you suppose they would immediately strain every nerve to divert the entire stream of strangers to themselves? Unquestionably they would; and then where should we be? We should probably have to abandon

the whole thing, which has cost us so much money—and then you would have ruined your native town.

Dr. Stockmann. I—should have ruined—!

Peter Stockmann. It is simply and solely through the Baths that the town has before it any future worth mentioning. You know that just as well as I.

Dr. Stockmann. But what do you think ought to be done, then?

Peter Stockmann. Your report has not convinced me that the condition of the water at the Baths is as bad as you represent it to be.

Dr. Stockmann. I tell you it is even worse!—or at all events it will be in summer, when the warm weather comes.

Peter Stockmann. As I said, I believe you exaggerate the matter considerably.

A capable physician ought to know what measures to take—he ought to be capable of preventing injurious influences or of remedying them if they become obviously persistent.

Dr. Stockmann. Well? What more?

Peter Stockmann. The water supply for the Baths is now an established fact, and in consequence must be treated as such. But probably the Committee, at its discretion, will not be disinclined to consider the question of how far it might be possible to introduce certain improvements consistently with a reasonable expenditure.

Dr. Stockmann. And do you suppose that I will have anything to do with such a piece of trickery as that?

Peter Stockmann. Trickery!!

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, it would be a trick—a fraud, a lie, a downright crime towards the public, towards the whole community!

Peter Stockmann. I have not, as I remarked before, been able to convince myself that there is actually any imminent danger.

Dr. Stockmann. You have! It is impossible that you should not be convinced. I know I have represented the facts absolutely truthfully and fairly. And you know it very well, Peter, only you won't acknowledge it. It was owing to your action that both the Baths and the water conduits were built where they are; and that is what you won't acknowledge—that damnable blunder of yours. Pooh!—do you suppose I don't see through you?

Peter Stockmann. And even if that were true? If I perhaps guard my reputation somewhat anxiously, it is in the interests of the town. Without moral authority I am powerless to direct public affairs as seems, to my judgment, to be best for the common good. And on that account—and for various other reasons too—it appears to me to be a matter

of importance that your report should not be delivered to the Committee. In the interests of the public, you must withhold it. Then, later on, I will raise the question and we will do our best, privately; but nothing of this unfortunate affair—not a single word of it—must come to the ears of the public.

Dr. Stockmann. I am afraid you will not be able to prevent that now, my dear Peter.

Peter Stockmann. It must and shall be prevented.

Dr. Stockmann. It is no use, I tell you. There are too many people that know about it.

Peter Stockmann. That know about it? Who? Surely you don't mean those fellows on the "People's Messenger"?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, they know. The liberal-minded independent press is going to see that you do your duty.

Peter Stockmann (after a short pause). You are an extraordinarily independent man, Thomas. Have you given no thought to the consequences this may have for yourself?

Dr. Stockmann. Consequences?—for me?

Peter Stockmann. For you and yours, yes.

Dr. Stockmann. What the deuce do you mean?

Peter Stockmann. I believe I have always behaved in a brotherly way to you—have always been ready to oblige or to help you?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, you have, and I am grateful to you for it.

Peter Stockmann. There is no need. Indeed, to some extent I was forced to do so—for my own sake. I always hoped that, if I helped to improve your financial position, I should be able to keep some check on you.

Dr. Stockmann. What!! Then it was only for your own sake—!

Peter Stockmann. Up to a certain point, yes. It is painful for a man in an official position to have his nearest relative compromising himself time after time.

Dr. Stockmann. And do you consider that I do that?

Peter Stockmann. Yes, unfortunately, you do, without even being aware of it. You have a restless, pugnacious, rebellious disposition. And then there is that disastrous propensity of yours to want to write about every sort of possible and impossible thing. The moment an idea comes into your head, you must needs go and write a newspaper article or a whole pamphlet about it.

Dr. Stockmann. Well, but is it not the duty of a citizen to let the public share in any new ideas he may have?

Peter Stockmann. Oh, the public doesn't require any new ideas. The public is best served by the good, old-established ideas it already has.

Dr. Stockmann. And that is your honest opinion?

Peter Stockmann. Yes, and for once I must talk frankly to you. Hitherto I have tried to avoid doing so, because I know how irritable you are; but now I must tell you the truth, Thomas. You have no conception what an amount of harm you do yourself by your impetuosity. You complain of the authorities, you even complain of the government—you are always pulling them to pieces; you insist that you have been neglected and persecuted. But what else can such a cantankerous man as you expect?

Dr. Stockmann. What next! Cantankerous, am I?

Peter Stockmann. Yes, Thomas, you are an extremely cantankerous man to work with—I know that to my cost. You disregard everything that you ought to have consideration for. You seem completely to forget that it is me you have to thank for your appointment here as medical officer to the Baths—

Dr. Stockmann. I was entitled to it as a matter of course!—I and nobody else! I was the first person to see that the town could be made into a flourishing watering place, and I was the only one who saw it at that time. I had to fight singlehanded in support of the idea for many years; and I wrote and wrote—

Peter Stockmann. Undoubtedly. But things were not ripe for the scheme then—though, of course, you could not judge of that in your out-of-the-way corner up north. But as soon as the opportune moment came I—and the others—took the matter into our hands—

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, and made this mess of all my beautiful plan. It is pretty obvious now what clever fellows you were!

Peter Stockmann. To my mind the whole thing only seems to mean that you are seeking another outlet for your combativeness. You want to pick a quarrel with your superiors—an old habit of yours. You cannot put up with any authority over you. You look askance at anyone who occupies a superior official position; you regard him as a personal enemy, and then any stick is good enough to beat him with. But now I have called your attention to the fact that the town's interests are at stake—and, incidentally, my own too. And therefore I must tell you, Thomas, that you will find me inexorable with regard to what I am about to require you to do.

Dr. Stockmann. And what is that?

Peter Stockmann. As you have been so indiscreet as to speak of this delicate matter to outsiders, despite the fact that you ought to have

treated it as entirely official and confidential, it is obviously impossible to hush it up now. All sorts of rumors will get about directly, and everybody who has a grudge against us will take care to embellish these rumors. So it will be necessary for you to refute them publicly.

Dr. Stockmann. If! How? I don't understand.

Peter Stockmann. What we shall expect is that, after making further investigations, you will come to the conclusion that the matter is not by any means as dangerous or as critical as you imagined in the first instance.

Dr. Stockmann. Oho!—so that is what you expect!

Peter Stockmann. And, what is more, we shall expect you to make public profession of your confidence in the Committee and in their readiness to consider fully and conscientiously what steps may be necessary to remedy any possible defects.

Dr. Stockmann. But you will never be able to do that by patching and tinkering at it—never! Take my word for it, Peter; I mean what I say, as deliberately and emphatically as possible.

Peter Stockmann. As an officer under the Committee, you have no right to any individual opinion.

Dr. Stockmann (amazed). No right?

Peter Stockmann. In your official capacity, no. As a private person, it is quite another matter. But as a subordinate member of the staff of the Baths, you have no right to express any opinion which runs contrary to that of your superiors.

Dr. Stockmann. This is too much! I, a doctor, a man of science, have no right to!—

Peter Stockmann. The matter in hand is not simply a scientific one. It is a complicated matter, and has its economic as well as its technical side.

Dr. Stockmann. I don't care what it is! I intend to be free to express my opinion on any subject under the sun.

Peter Stockmann. As you please—but not on any subject concerning the Baths. That we forbid.

Dr. Stockmann (shouting). You forbid!—You! A pack of—

Peter Stockmann. I forbid it—I, your chief; and if I forbid it, you have to obey.

Dr. Stockmann (controlling himself). Peter—if you were not my brother—

Petra (throwing open the door). Father, you shan't stand this!

Mrs. Stockmann (coming in after her). Petra, Petra!

Peter Stockmann. Oh, so you have been eavesdropping.

Mrs. Stockmann. You were talking so loud, we couldn't help—

Petra. Yes, I was listening.

Peter Stockmann. Well, after all, I am very glad—

Dr. Stockmann (going up to him). You were saying something about forbidding and obeying?

Peter Stockmann. You obliged me to take that tone with you.

Dr. Stockmann. And so I am to give myself the lie, publicly?

Peter Stockmann. We consider it absolutely necessary that you should make some such public statement as I have asked for.

Dr. Stockmann. And if I do not—obey?

Peter Stockmann. Then we shall publish a statement ourselves to reassure the public.

Dr. Stockmann. Very well; but in that case I shall use my pen against you. I stick to what I have said; I will show that I am right and that you are wrong. And what will you do then?

Peter Stockmann. Then I shall not be able to prevent your being dismissed.

Dr. Stockmann. What—?

Petra. Father—dismissed!

Mrs. Stockmann. Dismissed!

Peter Stockmann. Dismissed from the staff of the Baths. I shall be obliged to propose that you shall immediately be given notice, and shall not be allowed any further participation in the Baths' affairs.

Dr. Stockmann. You would dare to do that!

Peter Stockmann. It is you that are playing the daring game.

Petra. Uncle, that is a shameful way to treat a man like father!

Mrs. Stockmann. Do hold your tongue, Petra!

Peter Stockmann (looking at PETRA). Oh, so we volunteer our opinions already, do we? Of course. (*To MRS. STOCKMANN.*) Katherine, I imagine you are the most sensible person in this house. Use any influence you may have over your husband, and make him see what this will entail for his family as well as—

Dr. Stockmann. My family is my own concern and nobody else's!

Peter Stockmann. —for his own family, as I was saying, as well as for the town he lives in.

Dr. Stockmann. It is I who have the real good of the town at heart! I want to lay bare the defects that sooner or later must come to the light of day. I will show whether I love my native town.

Peter Stockmann. You, who in your blind obstinacy want to cut off the most important source of the town's welfare?

Dr. Stockmann. The source is poisoned, man! Are you mad? We are mak-

ing our living by retailing filth and corruption! The whole of our flourishing municipal life derives its sustenance from a lie!

Peter Stockmann. All imagination—or something even worse. The man who can throw out such offensive insinuations about his native town must be an enemy to our community.

Dr. Stockmann (going up to him). Do you dare to—!

Mrs. Stockmann (throwing herself between them). Thomas!

Petra (catching her father by the arm). Don't lose your temper, father!

Peter Stockmann. I will not expose myself to violence. Now you have had a warning; so reflect on what you owe to yourself and your family. Good-by. (*Goes out.*)

Dr. Stockmann (walking up and down). Am I to put up with such treatment as this? In my own house, Katherine! What do you think of that!

Mrs. Stockmann. Indeed it is both shameful and absurd. Thomas—

Petra. If only I could give uncle a piece of my mind—

Dr. Stockmann. It is my own fault. I ought to have flown out at him long ago!—shown my teeth!—bitten! To hear him call me an enemy to our community! Me! I shall not take that lying down, upon my soul!

Mrs. Stockmann. But, dear Thomas, your brother has power on his side—

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, but I have right on mine, I tell you.

Mrs. Stockmann. Oh yes, right—right. What is the use of having right on your side if you have not got might?

Petra. Oh, mother!—how can you say such a thing!

Dr. Stockmann. Do you imagine that in a free country it is no use having right on your side? You are absurd, Katherine. Besides, haven't I got the liberal-minded, independent press to lead the way, and the compact majority behind me? That is might enough, I should think!

Mrs. Stockmann. But, good heavens, Thomas, you don't mean to—?

Dr. Stockmann. Don't mean to what?

Mrs. Stockmann. To set yourself up in opposition to your brother.

Dr. Stockmann. In God's name, what else do you suppose I should do but take my stand on right and truth?

Petra. Yes, I was just going to say that.

Mrs. Stockmann. But it won't do you any earthly good. If they won't do it, they won't.

Dr. Stockmann. Oho, Katherine! Just give me time, and you will see how I will carry the war into their camp.

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, you carry the war into their camp, and you get your dismissal—that is what you will do.

Dr. Stockmann. In any case I shall have done my duty towards the public—towards the community. I, who am called its enemy!

Mrs. Stockmann. But towards your family, Thomas? Towards your own home! Do you think that is doing your duty towards those you have to provide for?

Petra. Ah, don't think always first of us, mother.

Mrs. Stockmann. Oh, it is easy for you to talk; you are able to shift for yourself, if need be. But remember the boys, Thomas; and think a little too of yourself, and of me—

Dr. Stockmann. I think you are out of your senses, Katherine! If I were to be such a miserable coward as to go on my knees to Peter and his damned crew, do you suppose I should ever know an hour's peace of mind all my life afterwards?

Mrs. Stockmann. I don't know anything about that; but God preserve us from the peace of mind we shall have, all the same, if you go on defying him! You will find yourself again without the means of subsistence, with no income to count upon. I should think we had had enough of that in the old days. Remember that, Thomas; think what that means.

Dr. Stockmann (*collecting himself with a struggle and clenching his fists*). And this is what this slavery can bring upon a free, honorable man! Isn't it horrible, Katherine?

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, it is sinful to treat you so, it is perfectly true. But, good heavens, one has to put up with so much injustice in this world. There are the boys, Thomas! Look at them! What is to become of them? Oh, no, no, you can never have the heart—.

EJLIF and MORTEN have come in while she was speaking, with their school books in their hands.

Dr. Stockmann. The boys—! (*Recovers himself suddenly.*) No, even if the whole world goes to pieces, I will never bow my neck to this yoke! (*Goes towards his room.*)

Mrs. Stockmann (*following him*). Thomas—what are you going to do!

Dr. Stockmann (*at his door*). I mean to have the right to look my sons in the face when they are grown men. (*Goes into his room.*)

Mrs. Stockmann (*bursting into tears*). God help us all!

Petra. Father is splendid! He will not give in.

The boys look on in amazement; PETRA signs to them not to speak.

ACT III

SCENE. *The editorial office of the "People's Messenger."* The entrance door is on the left-hand side of the back wall; on the right-hand side is another door with glass panels through which the printing room can be seen. Another door in the right-hand wall. In the middle of the room is a large table covered with papers, newspapers and books. In the foreground on the left a window, before which stand a desk and a high stool. There are a couple of easy chairs by the table, and other chairs standing along the wall. The room is dingy and uncomfortable; the furniture is old, the chairs stained and torn. In the printing room the compositors are seen at work, and a printer is working a hand press. HOVSTAD is sitting at the desk, writing. BILLING comes in from the right with DR. STOCKMANN'S manuscript in his hand.

Billing. Well, I must say!

Hovstad (still writing). Have you read it through?

Billing (laying the manuscript on the desk). Yes, indeed I have.

Hovstad. Don't you think the Doctor hits them pretty hard?

Billing. Hard? Bless my soul, he's crushing! Every word falls like—how shall I put it?—like the blow of a sledge hammer.

Hovstad. Yes, but they are not the people to throw up the sponge at the first blow.

Billing. That is true; and for that reason we must strike blow upon blow until the whole of this aristocracy tumbles to pieces. As I sat in there reading this, I almost seemed to see a revolution in being.

Hovstad (turning round). Hush! Speak so that Aslaksen cannot hear you.

Billing (lowering his voice). Aslaksen is a chicken-hearted chap, a coward; there is nothing of the man in him. But this time you will insist on your own way, won't you? You will put the Doctor's article in?

Hovstad. Yes, and if the Mayor doesn't like it—

Billing. That will be the devil of a nuisance.

Hovstad. Well, fortunately we can turn the situation to good account, whatever happens. If the Mayor will not fall in with the Doctor's project, he will have all the small tradesmen down on him—the whole of the Householders' Association and the rest of them. And if he does fall in with it, he will fall out with the whole crowd of large shareholders in the Baths, who up to now have been his most valuable supporters—

Billing. Yes, because they will certainly have to fork out a pretty penny—*Hovstad.* Yes, you may be sure they will. And in this way the ring will be broken up, you see, and then in every issue of the paper we will enlighten the public on the Mayor's incapability on one point and another, and make it clear that all the positions of trust in the town, the whole control of municipal affairs, ought to be put in the hands of the Liberals.

Billing. That is perfectly true! I see it coming—I see it coming; we are on the threshold of a revolution!

A knock is heard at the door.

Hovstad. Hush! (*Calls out.*) Come in! (DR. STOCKMANN comes in by the street door. HOVSTAD goes to meet him.) Ah, it is you, Doctor! Well?

Dr. Stockmann. You may set to work and print it, Mr. Hovstad!

Hovstad. Has it come to that, then?

Billing. Hurrah!

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, print away. Undoubtedly it has come to that. Now they must take what they get. There is going to be a fight in the town, Mr. Billing!

Billing. War to the knife, I hope! We will get our knives to their throats, Doctor!

Dr. Stockmann. This article is only a beginning. I have already got four or five more sketched out in my head. Where is Aslaksen?

Billing (*calls into the printing room.*) Aslaksen, just come here for a minute!

Hovstad. Four or five more articles, did you say? On the same subject?

Dr. Stockmann. No—far from it, my dear fellow. No, they are about quite another matter. But they all spring from the question of the water supply and the drainage. One thing leads to another, you know. It is like beginning to pull down an old house, exactly.

Billing. Upon my soul, it's true; you find you are not done till you have pulled all the old rubbish down.

Aslaksen (*coming in.*) Pulled down? You are not thinking of pulling down the Baths surely, Doctor?

Hovstad. Far from it, don't be afraid.

Dr. Stockmann. No, we meant something quite different. Well, what do you think of my article, Mr. Hovstad?

Hovstad. I think it is simply a masterpiece—

Dr. Stockmann. Do you really think so? Well, I am very pleased, very pleased.

Hovstad. It is so clear and intelligible. One need have no special knowl-

edge to understand the bearing of it. You will have every enlightened man on your side.

Aslaksen. And every prudent man too, I hope?

Billing. The prudent and the imprudent—almost the whole town.

Aslaksen. In that case we may venture to print it.

Dr. Stockmann. I should think so!

Hovstad. We will put it in tomorrow morning.

Dr. Stockmann. Of course—you must not lose a single day. What I wanted to ask you, Mr. Aslaksen, was if you would supervise the printing of it yourself.

Aslaksen. With pleasure.

Dr. Stockmann. Take care of it as if it were a treasure! No misprints—every word is important. I will look in again a little later; perhaps you will be able to let me see a proof. I can't tell you how eager I am to see it in print, and see it burst upon the public—

Billing. Burst upon them—yes, like a flash of lightning!

Dr. Stockmann. —and to have it submitted to the judgment of my intelligent fellow townsmen. You cannot imagine what I have gone through today. I have been threatened first with one thing and then with another; they have tried to rob me of my most elementary rights as a man—

Billing. What! Your rights as a man!

Dr. Stockmann. —they have tried to degrade me, to make a coward of me, to force me to put personal interests before my most sacred convictions—

Billing. That is too much—I'm damned if it isn't.

Hovstad. Oh, you mustn't be surprised at anything from that quarter.

Dr. Stockmann. Well, they will get the worst of it with me; they may assure themselves of that. I shall consider the "People's Messenger" my sheet anchor now, and every single day I will bombard them with one article after another, like bombshells—

Aslaksen. Yes, but—

Billing. Hurrah!—it is war, it is war!

Dr. Stockmann. I shall smite them to the ground—I shall crush them—I shall break down all their defenses, before the eyes of the honest public! That is what I shall do!

Aslaksen. Yes, but in moderation, Doctor—proceed with moderation—

Billing. Not a bit of it, not a bit of it! Don't spare the dynamite!

Dr. Stockmann. Because it is not merely a question of water supply and drains now, you know. No—it is the whole of our social life that we have got to purify and disinfect—

Billing. Spoken like a deliverer!

Dr. Stockmann. All the incapables must be turned out, you understand—and that in every walk of life! Endless vistas have opened themselves to my mind's eye today. I cannot see it all quite clearly yet, but I shall in time. Young and vigorous standard-bearers—those are what we need and must seek, my friends; we must have new men in command at all our outposts.

Billing. Hear, hear!

Dr. Stockmann. We only need to stand by one another, and it will all be perfectly easy. The revolution will be launched like a ship that runs smoothly off the stocks. Don't you think so?

Hovstad. For my part I think we have now a prospect of getting the municipal authority into the hands where it should lie.

Aslaksen. And if only we proceed with moderation, I cannot imagine that there will be any risk.

Dr. Stockmann. Who the devil cares whether there is any risk or not? What I am doing, I am doing in the name of truth and for the sake of my conscience.

Hovstad. You are a man who deserves to be supported, Doctor.

Aslaksen. Yes, there is no denying that the Doctor is a true friend to the town—a real friend to the community, that he is.

Billing. Take my word for it, Aslaksen, Dr. Stockmann is a friend of the people.

Aslaksen. I fancy the Householders' Association will make use of that expression before long.

Dr. Stockmann (affected, grasps their hands). Thank you, thank you, my dear staunch friends. It is very refreshing to me to hear you say that; my brother called me something quite different. By Jove, he shall have it back, with interest! But now I must be off to see a poor devil—. I will come back, as I said. Keep a very careful eye on the manuscript, Aslaksen, and don't for worlds leave out any of my notes of exclamation! Rather put one or two more in! Capital, capital! Well, good-by for the present—good-by, good-by!

They show him to the door, and bow him out.

Hovstad. He may prove an invaluable useful man to us.

Aslaksen. Yes, so long as he confines himself to this matter of the Baths. But if he goes farther afield, I don't think it would be advisable to follow him.

Hovstad. Hm!—that all depends—

Billing. You are so infernally timid, Aslaksen!

Aslaksen. Timid? Yes, when it is a question of the local authorities, I am timid, Mr. Billing; it is a lesson I have learned in the school of experience, let me tell you. But try me in higher politics in matters that concern the government itself, and then see if I am timid.

Billing. No, you aren't, I admit. But this is simply contradicting yourself.

Aslaksen. I am a man with a conscience, and that is the whole matter. If you attack the government, you don't do the community any harm, anyway; those fellows pay no attention to attacks, you see—they go on just as they are, in spite of them. But *local* authorities are different; they *can* be turned out, and then perhaps you may get an ignorant lot into office who may do irreparable harm to the householders and everybody else.

Hovstad. But what of the education of citizens by self-government—don't you attach any importance to that?

Aslaksen. When a man has interests of his own to protect, he cannot think of everything, Mr. Hovstad.

Hovstad. Then I hope I shall never have interests of my own to protect!

Billing. Hear, hear!

Aslaksen (with a smile). Hm! (*Points to the desk.*) Mr. Sheriff Stensgaard was your predecessor at that editorial desk.

Billing (spitting). Bah! That turncoat.

Hovstad. I am not a weathercock—and never will be.

Aslaksen. A politician should never be too certain of anything, Mr. Hovstad. And as for you, Mr. Billing, I should think it is time for you to be taking in a reef or two in your sails, seeing that you are applying for the post of secretary to the Bench.

Billing. I—!

Hovstad. Are you, Billing?

Billing. Well, yes—but you must clearly understand I am doing it only to annoy the bigwigs.

Aslaksen. Anyhow, it is no business of mine. But if I am to be accused of timidity and of inconsistency in my principles, this is what I want to point out: my political past is an open book. I have never changed, except perhaps to become a little more moderate, you see. My heart is still with the people; but I don't deny that my reason has a certain bias towards the authorities—the local ones, I mean. (*Goes into the printing room.*)

Billing. Oughtn't we to try and get rid of him, Hovstad?

Hovstad. Do you know anyone else who will advance the money for our paper and printing bill?

Billing. It is an infernal nuisance that we don't possess some capital to trade on.

Hovstad (*sitting down at his desk*). Yes, if we only had that, then—

Billing. Suppose you were to apply to Dr. Stockmann?

Hovstad (*turning over some papers*). What is the use? He has got nothing.

Billing. No, but he has got a warm man in the background, old Morten Kiil—"the Badger," as they call him.

Hovstad (*writing*). Are you so sure *he* has got anything?

Billing. Good Lord, of course he has! And some of it must come to the Stockmanns. Most probably he will do something for the children, at all events.

Hovstad (*turning half round*). Are you counting on that?

Billing. Counting on it? Of course I am not counting on anything.

Hovstad. That is right. And I should not count on the secretaryship to the Bench either, if I were you; for I can assure you—you won't get it.

Billing. Do you think I am not quite aware of that? My object is precisely *not* to get it. A slight of that kind stimulates a man's fighting power—it is like getting a supply of fresh bile—and I am sure one needs that badly enough in a hole-and-corner place like this, where it is so seldom anything happens to stir one up.

Hovstad (*writing*). Quite so, quite so.

Billing. Ah, I shall be heard of yet!—Now I shall go and write the appeal to the Householders' Association. (*Goes into the room on the right.*)

Hovstad (*sitting at his desk, biting his penholder, says slowly*). Hm!—that's it, is it? (*A knock is heard.*) Come in! (*PETRA comes in by the outer door.* HOVSTAD gets up.) What, you!—here?

Petra. Yes, you must forgive me—

Hovstad (*pulling a chair forward*). Won't you sit down?

Petra. No, thank you; I must go again in a moment.

Hovstad. Have you come with a message from your father, by any chance?

Petra. No, I have come on my own account. (*Takes a book out of her coat pocket.*) Here is the English story.

Hovstad. Why have you brought it back?

Petra. Because I am not going to translate it.

Hovstad. But you promised me faithfully—

Petra. Yes, but then I had not read it. I don't suppose you have read it either?

Hovstad. No, you know quite well I don't understand English; but—

Petra. Quite so. That is why I wanted to tell you that you must find something else. (*Lays the book on the table.*) You can't use this for the "People's Messenger."

Hovstad. Why not?

Petra. Because it conflicts with all your opinions.

Hovstad. Oh, for that matter—

Petra. You don't understand me. The burden of this story is that there is a supernatural power that looks after the so-called good people in this world and makes everything happen for the best in their case—while all the so-called bad people are punished.

Hovstad. Well, but that is all right. That is just what our readers want.

Petra. And are you going to be the one to give it to them? For myself, I do not believe a word of it. You know quite well that things do not happen so in reality.

Hovstad. You are perfectly right; but an editor cannot always act as he would prefer. He is often obliged to bow to the wishes of the public in unimportant matters. Politics are the most important thing in life—for a newspaper, anyway; and if I want to carry my public with me on the path that leads to liberty and progress, I must not frighten them away. If they find a moral tale of this sort in the serial at the bottom of the page, they will be all the more ready to read what is printed above it; they feel more secure, as it were.

Petra. For shame! You would never go and set a snare like that for your readers; you are not a spider!

Hovstad (smiling). Thank you for having such a good opinion of me. No; as a matter of fact that is Billing's idea and not mine.

Petra. Billing's!

Hovstad. Yes; anyway he propounded that theory here one day. And it is Billing who is so anxious to have that story in the paper; I don't know anything about the book.

Petra. But how can Billing, with his emancipated views—

Hovstad. Oh, Billing is a many-sided man. He is applying for the post of secretary to the Bench, too, I hear.

Petra. I don't believe it, Mr. Hovstad. How could he possibly bring himself to do such a thing?

Hovstad. Ah, you must ask him that.

Petra. I should never have thought it of him.

Hovstad (looking more closely at her). No? Does it really surprise you so much?

Petra. Yes. Or perhaps not altogether. Really, I don't quite know—

Hovstad. We journalists are not much worth, Miss Stockmann.

Petra. Do you really mean that?

Hovstad. I think so sometimes.

Petra. Yes, in the ordinary affairs of everyday life, perhaps; I can understand that. But now, when you have taken a weighty matter in hand—

Hovstad. This matter of your father's, you mean?

Petra. Exactly. It seems to me that now you must feel you are a man worth more than most.

Hovstad. Yes, today I do feel something of that sort.

Petra. Of course you do, don't you? It is a splendid vocation you have chosen—to smooth the way for the march of unappreciated truths, and new and courageous lines of thought. If it were nothing more than because you stand fearlessly in the open and take up the cause of an injured man—

Hovstad. Especially when that injured man is—ahem!—I don't rightly know how to—

Petra. When that man is so upright and so honest, you mean?

Hovstad (more gently). Especially when he is your father, I meant.

Petra (suddenly checked). That?

Hovstad. Yes, Petra—Miss Petra.

Petra. Is it that, that is first and foremost with you? Not the matter itself?

Not the truth?—not my father's big generous heart?

Hovstad. Certainly—of course—that too.

Petra. No, thank you; you have betrayed yourself, Mr. Hovstad, and now I shall never trust you again in anything.

Hovstad. Can you really take it so amiss in me that it is mostly for your sake?

Petra. What I am angry with you for is for not having been honest with my father. You talked to him as if the truth and the good of the community were what lay nearest to your heart. You have made fools of both my father and me. You are not the man you made yourself out to be. And that I shall never forgive you—never!

Hovstad. You ought not to speak so bitterly, Miss Petra—least of all now.

Petra. Why not now, especially?

Hovstad. Because your father cannot do without my help.

Petra (looking him up and down). Are you that sort of man too? For shame!

Hovstad. No, no, I am not. This came upon me so unexpectedly—you must believe that.

Petra. I know what to believe. Good-by.

Aslaksen (*coming from the printing room, hurriedly and with an air of mystery*).
Damnation, Hovstad!—(*Sees Petra.*) Oh, this is awkward—

Petra. There is the book; you must give it to some one else. (*Goes towards the door.*)

Hovstad (*following her*). But, Miss Stockmann—

Petra. Good-by. (*Goes out.*)

Aslaksen. I say—Mr. Hovstad—

Hovstad. Well, well!—what is it?

Aslaksen. The Mayor is outside in the printing room.

Hovstad. The Mayor, did you say?

Aslaksen. Yes, he wants to speak to you. He came in by the back door—didn't want to be seen, you understand.

Hovstad. What can he want? Wait a bit—I will go myself. (*Goes to the door of the printing room, opens it, bows and invites PETER STOCKMANN in.*) Just see, Aslaksen, that no one—

Aslaksen. Quite so. (*Goes into the printing room.*)

Peter Stockmann. You did not expect to see me here, Mr. Hovstad?

Hovstad. No, I confess I did not.

Peter Stockmann (*looking round*). You are very snug in here—very nice indeed.

Hovstad. Oh—

Peter Stockmann. And here I come, without any notice, to take up your time!

Hovstad. By all means, Mr. Mayor. I am at your service. But let me relieve you of your—(*takes STOCKMANN'S hat and stick and puts them on a chair*).

Won't you sit down?

Peter Stockmann (*sitting down by the table*). Thank you. (*HOVSTAD sits down.*) I have had an extremely annoying experience today, Mr. Hovstad.

Hovstad. Really? Ah well, I expect with all the various business you have to attend to—

Peter Stockmann. The Medical Officer of the Baths is responsible for what happened today.

Hovstad. Indeed? The Doctor?

Peter Stockmann. He has addressed a kind of report to the Baths Committee on the subject of certain supposed defects in the Baths.

Hovstad. Has he indeed?

Peter Stockmann. Yes—has he not told you? I thought he said—

Hovstad. Ah, yes—it is true he did mention something about—
Aslaksen (*coming from the printing room*). I ought to have that copy—
Hovstad (*angrily*). Ahem!—there it is on the desk.

Aslaksen (*taking it*). Right.

Peter Stockmann. But look there—that is the thing I was speaking of!

Aslaksen. Yes, that is the Doctor's article, Mr. Mayor.

Hovstad. Oh, is *that* what you were speaking about?

Peter Stockmann. Yes, that is it. What do you think of it?

Hovstad. Oh, I am only a layman—and I have only taken a very cursory glance at it.

Peter Stockmann. But you are going to print it?

Hovstad. I cannot very well refuse a distinguished man—

Aslaksen. I have nothing to do with editing the paper, Mr. Mayor—

Peter Stockmann. I understand.

Aslaksen. I merely print what is put into my hands.

Peter Stockmann. Quite so.

Aslaksen. And so I must—(*moves off towards the printing room*).

Peter Stockmann. No, but wait a moment, Mr. Aslaksen. You will allow me, Mr. Hovstad?

Hovstad. If you please, Mr. Mayor.

Peter Stockmann. You are a discreet and thoughtful man, Mr. Aslaksen.

Aslaksen. I am delighted to hear you think so, sir.

Peter Stockmann. And a man of very considerable influence.

Aslaksen. Chiefly among the small tradesmen, sir.

Peter Stockmann. The small taxpayers are the majority—here as everywhere else.

Aslaksen. That is true.

Peter Stockmann. And I have no doubt you know the general trend of opinion among them, don't you?

Aslaksen. Yes, I think I may say I do, Mr. Mayor.

Peter Stockmann. Yes. Well, since there is such a praiseworthy spirit of self-sacrifice among the less wealthy citizens of our town—

Aslaksen. What?

Hovstad. Self-sacrifice?

Peter Stockmann. It is pleasing evidence of a public-spirited feeling, extremely pleasing evidence. I might almost say I hardly expected it. But you have a closer knowledge of public opinion than I.

Aslaksen. But, Mr. Mayor—

Peter Stockmann. And indeed it is no small sacrifice that the town is going to make.

Hovstad. The town?

Aslaksen. But I don't understand. Is it the Baths—?

Peter Stockmann. At a provisional estimate, the alterations that the Medical Officer asserts to be desirable will cost somewhere about twenty thousand pounds.

Aslaksen. That is a lot of money, but—

Peter Stockmann. Of course it will be necessary to raise a municipal loan.

Hovstad (getting up). Surely you never mean that the town must pay—?

Aslaksen. Do you mean that it must come out of the municipal funds?—out of the ill-filled pockets of the small tradesmen?

Peter Stockmann. Well, my dear Mr. Aslaksen, where else is the money to come from?

Aslaksen. The gentlemen who own the Baths ought to provide that.

Peter Stockmann. The proprietors of the Baths are not in a position to incur any further expense.

Aslaksen. Is that absolutely certain, Mr. Mayor?

Peter Stockmann. I have satisfied myself that it is so. If the town wants these very extensive alterations, it will have to pay for them.

Aslaksen. But, damn it all—I beg your pardon—this is quite another matter, Mr. Hovstad!

Hovstad. It is, indeed.

Peter Stockmann. The most fatal part of it is that we shall be obliged to shut the Baths for a couple of years.

Hovstad. Shut them? Shut them altogether?

Aslaksen. For two years?

Peter Stockmann. Yes, the work will take as long as that—at least.

Aslaksen. I'm damned if we will stand that, Mr. Mayor! What are we householders to live upon in the meantime?

Peter Stockmann. Unfortunately that is an extremely difficult question to answer, Mr. Aslaksen. But what would you have us do? Do you suppose we shall have a single visitor in the town, if we go about proclaiming that our water is polluted, that we are living over a plague spot, that the entire town—

Aslaksen. And the whole thing is merely imagination?

Peter Stockmann. With the best will in the world, I have not been able to come to any other conclusion.

Aslaksen. Well then I must say it is absolutely unjustifiable of Dr. Stockmann—I beg your pardon, Mr. Mayor—

Peter Stockmann. What you say is lamentably true, Mr. Aslaksen. My brother has unfortunately always been a headstrong man.

Aslaksen. After this, do you mean to give him your support, Mr. Hovstad? *Hovstad.* Can you suppose for a moment that I—?

Peter Stockmann. I have drawn up a short résumé of the situation as it appears from a reasonable man's point of view. In it I have indicated how certain possible defects might suitably be remedied without outrunning the resources of the Baths Committee.

Hovstad. Have you got it with you, Mr. Mayor?

Peter Stockmann (*fumbling in his pocket*). Yes, I brought it with me in case you should—

Aslaksen. Good Lord, there he is!

Peter Stockmann. Who? My brother?

Hovstad. Where? Where?

Aslaksen. He has just gone through the printing room.

Peter Stockmann. How unlucky! I don't want to meet him here, and I had still several things to speak to you about.

Hovstad (*pointing to the door on the right*). Go in there for the present.

Peter Stockmann. But—?

Hovstad. You will only find Billing in there.

Aslaksen. Quick, quick, Mr. Mayor—he is just coming.

Peter Stockmann. Yes, very well; but see that you get rid of him quickly.
(*Goes out through the door on the right, which ASLAKSEN opens for him and shuts after him.*)

Hovstad. Pretend to be doing something, Aslaksen. (*Sits down and writes.*)

ASLAKSEN begins foraging among a heap of newspapers that are lying on a chair.)

Dr. Stockmann (*coming in from the printing room*). Here I am again. (*Puts down his hat and stick.*)

Hovstad (*writing*). Already, Doctor? Hurry up with what we were speaking about, Aslaksen. We are very pressed for time today.

Dr. Stockmann (*to ASLAKSEN*). No proof for me to see yet, I hear.

Aslaksen (*without turning round*). You couldn't expect it yet, Doctor.

Dr. Stockmann. No, no; but I am impatient, as you can understand. I shall not know a moment's peace of mind till I see it in print.

Hovstad. H'm!—It will take a good while yet, won't it, Aslaksen?

Aslaksen. Yes, I am almost afraid it will.

Dr. Stockmann. All right, my dear friends; I will come back. I do not mind coming back twice if necessary. A matter of such great importance—the welfare of the town at stake—it is no time to shirk trouble. (*Is just going, but stops and comes back.*) Look here—there is one thing more I want to speak to you about.

Hovstad. Excuse me, but could it not wait till some other time?

Dr. Stockmann. I can tell you in half a dozen words. It is only this. When my article is read tomorrow and it is realized that I have been quietly working the whole winter for the welfare of the town—

Hovstad. Yes, but, Doctor—

Dr. Stockmann. I know what you are going to say. You don't see how on earth it was any more than my duty—my obvious duty as a citizen. Of course it wasn't; I know that as well as you. But my fellow citizens, you know—! Good Lord, think of all the good souls who think so highly of me—!

Aslaksen. Yes, our townsfolk have had a very high opinion of you so far, Doctor.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, and that is just why I am afraid they—. Well, this is the point; when this reaches them, especially the poorer classes, and sounds in their ears like a summons to take the town's affairs into their own hands for the future—

Hovstad (getting up). Ahem! Doctor, I won't conceal from you the fact—

Dr. Stockmann. Ah!—I knew there was something in the wind! But I won't hear a word of it. If anything of that sort is being set on foot—

Hovstad. Of what sort?

Dr. Stockmann. Well, whatever it is—whether it is a demonstration in my honor, or a banquet, or a subscription list for some presentation to me—whatever it is, you must promise me solemnly and faithfully to put a stop to it. You too, Mr. Aslaksen; do you understand?

Hovstad. You must forgive me, Doctor, but sooner or later we must tell you the plain truth—

He is interrupted by the entrance of MRS. STOCKMANN, who comes in from the street door.

Mrs. Stockmann (seeing her husband). Just as I thought!

Hovstad (going towards her). You too, Mrs. Stockmann?

Dr. Stockmann. What on earth do you want here, Katherine?

Mrs. Stockmann. I should think you know very well what I want.

Hovstad. Won't you sit down? Or perhaps—

Mrs. Stockmann. No, thank you; don't trouble. And you must not be offended at my coming to fetch my husband; I am the mother of three children, you know.

Dr. Stockmann. Nonsense!—we know all about that.

Mrs. Stockmann. Well, one would not give you credit for much thought for your wife and children today; if you had had that, you would not have gone and dragged us all into misfortune.

Dr. Stockmann. Are you out of your senses, Katherine! Because a man

has a wife and children, is he not to be allowed to proclaim the truth—is he not to be allowed to be an actively useful citizen—is he not to be allowed to do a service to his native town!

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, Thomas—in reason.

Aslaksen. Just what I say. Moderation is everything.

Mrs. Stockmann. And that is why you wrong us, Mr. Hovstad, in enticing my husband away from his home and making a dupe of him in all this.

Hovstad. I certainly am making a dupe of no one—

Dr. Stockmann. Making a dupe of me! Do you suppose *I* should allow myself to be duped!

Mrs. Stockmann. It is just what you do. I know quite well you have more brains than anyone in the town, but you are extremely easily duped, Thomas. (*To HOVSTAD.*) Please to realize that he loses his post at the Baths if you print what he has written—

Aslaksen. What!

Hovstad. Look here, Doctor—

Dr. Stockmann (laughing). Ha-ha!—just let them try! No, no—they will take good care not to. I have got the compact majority behind me, let me tell you!

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, that is just the worst of it—your having any such horrid thing behind you.

Dr. Stockmann. Rubbish, Katherine!—Go home and look after your house and leave me to look after the community. How can you be so afraid, when I am so confident and happy? (*Walks up and down, rubbing his hands.*) Truth and the People will win the fight, you may be certain! I see the whole of the broadminded middle class marching like a victorious army!—! (*Stops beside a chair.*) What the deuce is that lying there?

Aslaksen. Good Lord!

Hovstad. Ahem!

Dr. Stockmann. Here we have the topmost pinnacle of authority! (*Takes the Mayor's official hat carefully between his finger tips and holds it up in the air.*)

Mrs. Stockmann. The Mayor's hat!

Dr. Stockmann. And here is the staff of office too. How in the name of all that's wonderful—?

Hovstad. Well, you see—

Dr. Stockmann. Oh, I understand. He has been here trying to talk you over. Ha-ha!—he made rather a mistake there! And as soon as he

caught sight of me in the printing room—. (*Bursts out laughing.*) Did he run away, Mr. Aslaksen?

Aslaksen (hurriedly). Yes, he ran away, Doctor.

Dr. Stockmann. Ran away without his stick or his— Fiddlesticks! Peter doesn't run away and leave his belongings behind him. But what the deuce have you done with him? Ah!—in there, of course. Now you shall see, Katherine!

Mrs. Stockmann. Thomas—please don't—!

Aslaksen. Don't be rash, Doctor.

DR. STOCKMANN has put on the Mayor's hat and taken his stick in his hand. He goes up to the door, opens it, and stands with his hand to his hat at the salute. PETER STOCKMANN comes in, red with anger. BILLING follows him.

Peter Stockmann. What does this tomfoolery mean?

Dr. Stockmann. Be respectful, my good Peter. I am the chief authority in the town now. (*Walks up and down.*)

Mrs. Stockmann (almost in tears). Really, Thomas!

Peter Stockmann (following him about). Give me my hat and stick.

Dr. Stockmann (in the same tone as before). If you are chief constable, let me tell you that I am the Mayor—I am the master of the whole town, please understand!

Peter Stockmann. Take off my hat, I tell you. Remember it is part of an official uniform.

Dr. Stockmann. Pooh! Do you think the newly awakened lionhearted people are going to be frightened by an official hat? There is going to be a revolution in the town tomorrow, let me tell you. You thought you could turn me out; but now I shall turn you out—turn you out of all your various offices. Do you think I cannot? Listen to me. I have triumphant social forces behind me. Hovstad and Billing will thunder in the "People's Messenger," and Aslaksen will take the field at the head of the whole Householders' Association—

Aslaksen. That I won't, Doctor.

Dr. Stockmann. Of course you will—

Peter Stockmann. Ah!—may I ask then if Mr. Hovstad intends to join this agitation?

Hovstad. No, Mr. Mayor.

Aslaksen. No, Mr. Hovstad is not such a fool as to go and ruin his paper and himself for the sake of an imaginary grievance.

Dr. Stockmann (looking round him). What does this mean?

Hovstad. You have represented your case in a false light, Doctor, and therefore I am unable to give you my support.

Billing. And after what the Mayor was so kind as to tell me just now, I—
Dr. Stockmann. A false light! Leave that part of it to me. Only print my article; I am quite capable of defending it.

Hovstad. I am not going to print it. I cannot and will not and dare not print it.

Dr. Stockmann. You dare not? What nonsense!—you are the editor; and an editor controls his paper, I suppose!

Aslaksen. No, it is the subscribers, Doctor.

Peter Stockmann. Fortunately, yes.

Aslaksen. It is public opinion—the enlightened public-householders and people of that kind; they control the newspapers.

Dr. Stockmann (composedly). And I have all these influences against me?

Aslaksen. Yes, you have. It would mean the absolute ruin of the community if your article were to appear.

Dr. Stockmann. Indeed.

Peter Stockmann. My hat and stick, if you please. (DR. STOCKMANN takes off the hat and lays it on the table with the stick. PETER STOCKMANN takes them up.) Your authority as mayor has come to an untimely end.

Dr. Stockmann. We have not got to the end yet. (*To Hovstad.*) Then it is quite impossible for you to print my article in the “People’s Messenger”?

Hovstad. Quite impossible—out of regard for your family as well.

Mrs. Stockmann. You need not concern yourself about his family, thank you, Mr. Hovstad.

Peter Stockmann (taking a paper from his pocket). It will be sufficient, for the guidance of the public, if this appears. It is an official statement. May I trouble you?

Hovstad (taking the paper). Certainly; I will see that it is printed.

Dr. Stockmann. But not mine. Do you imagine that you can silence me and stifle the truth! You will not find it so easy as you suppose. Mr. Aslaksen, kindly take my manuscript at once and print it as a pamphlet—at my expense. I will have four hundred copies—no, five—six hundred.

Aslaksen. If you offered me its weight in gold, I could not lend my press for any such purpose, Doctor. It would be flying in the face of public opinion. You will not get it printed anywhere in the town.

Dr. Stockmann. Then give it me back.

Hovstad (*giving him the manuscript*). Here it is.

Dr. Stockmann (*taking his hat and stick*). It shall be made public all the same.

I will read it out at a mass meeting of the townspeople. All my fellow citizens shall hear the voice of truth!

Peter Stockmann. You will not find any public body in the town that will give you the use of their hall for such a purpose.

Aslaksen. Not a single one, I am certain.

Billing. No, I'm damned if you will find one.

Mrs. Stockmann. But this is too shameful! Why should every one turn against you like that?

Dr. Stockmann (*angrily*). I will tell you why. It is because all the men in this town are old women—like you; they all think of nothing but their families, and never of the community.

Mrs. Stockmann (*putting her arm into his*). Then I will show them that an—an old woman can be a man for once. I am going to stand by you, Thomas!

Dr. Stockmann. Bravely said, Katherine! It shall be made public—as I am a living soul! If I can't hire a hall, I shall hire a drum, and parade the town with it and read it at every street corner.

Peter Stockmann. You are surely not such an arrant fool as that!

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, I am.

Aslaksen. You won't find a single man in the whole town to go with you.

Billing. No, I'm damned if you will.

Mrs. Stockmann. Don't give in, Thomas. I will tell the boys to go with you.

Dr. Stockmann. That is a splendid idea!

Mrs. Stockmann. Morten will be delighted; and Ejlif will do whatever he does.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, and Petra!—and you too, Katherine!

Mrs. Stockmann. No, I won't do that; but I will stand at the window and watch you, that's what I will do.

Dr. Stockmann (*puts his arms round her and kisses her*). Thank you, my dear! Now you and I are going to try a fall, my fine gentlemen! I am going to see whether a pack of cowards can succeed in gagging a patriot who wants to purify society! (*He and his wife go out by the street door.*)

Peter Stockmann (*shaking his head seriously*). Now he has sent her out of her senses, too.

ACT IV

SCENE. *A big old-fashioned room in CAPTAIN HORSTER'S house. At the back folding doors, which are standing open, lead to an anteroom. Three windows in the left-hand wall. In the middle of the opposite wall a platform has been erected. On this is a small table with two candles, a water bottle and glass, and a bell. The room is lit by lamps placed between the windows. In the foreground on the left there is a table with candles and a chair. To the right is a door and some chairs standing near it. The room is nearly filled with a crowd of towns-people of all sorts, a few women and schoolboys being among them. People are still streaming in from the back, and the room is soon filled.*

1st Citizen (*meeting another*). Hullo, Lamstad! You here too?

2nd Citizen. I go to every public meeting, I do.

3rd Citizen. Brought your whistle too, I expect!

2nd Citizen. I should think so. Haven't you?

3rd Citizen. Rather! And old Evensen said he was going to bring a cowhorn, he did.

2nd Citizen. Good old Evensen! (*Laughter among the crowd.*)

4th Citizen (*coming up to them*). I say, tell me what is going on here tonight.

2nd Citizen. Dr. Stockmann is going to deliver an address attacking the Mayor.

4th Citizen. But the Mayor is his brother.

1st Citizen. That doesn't matter; Dr. Stockmann's not the chap to be afraid.

3rd Citizen. But he is in the wrong; it said so in the "People's Messenger."

2nd Citizen. Yes, I expect he must be in the wrong this time, because neither the Householders' Association nor the Citizens' Club would lend him their hall for his meeting.

1st Citizen. He couldn't even get the loan of the hall at the Baths.

2nd Citizen. No, I should think not.

A Man in another part of the crowd. I say—who are we to back up in this?

Another Man, beside him. Watch Aslaksen, and do as he does.

Billing (*pushing his way through the crowd, with a writing case under*

his arm). Excuse me, gentlemen—do you mind letting me through? I am reporting for the “People’s Messenger.” Thank you very much!

(*He sits down at the table on the left.*)

A Workman. Who was that?

Second Workman. Don’t you know him? It’s Billing, who writes for Aslaksen’s paper.

CAPTAIN HORSTER brings in MRS. STOCKMANN and PETRA through the door on the right. EJLIF and MORTEN follow them in.

Horster. I thought you might all sit here; you can slip out easily from here, if things get too lively.

Mrs. Stockmann. Do you think there will be a disturbance?

Horster. One can never tell—with such a crowd. But sit down, and don’t be uneasy.

Mrs. Stockmann (sitting down). It was extremely kind of you to offer my husband the room.

Horster. Well, if nobody else would—

Petra (who has sat down beside her mother). And it was a plucky thing to do, Captain Horster.

Horster. Oh, it is not such a great matter as all that.

HOVSTAD and ASLAKSEN make their way through the crowd.

Aslaksen. (*going up to HORSTER*). Has the Doctor not come yet?

Horster. He is waiting in the next room.

Movement in the crowd by the door at the back.

Hovstad. Look—here comes the Mayor!

Billing. Yes, I’m damned if he hasn’t come after all!

PETER STOCKMANN makes his way gradually through the crowd, bows courteously, and takes up a position by the wall on the left. Shortly afterwards DR. STOCKMANN comes in by the right-hand door. He is dressed in a black frock coat, with a white tie. There is a little feeble applause, which is hushed down. Silence is obtained.

Dr. Stockmann (in an undertone). How do you feel, Katherine?

Mrs. Stockmann. All right, thank you. (*Lowering her voice.*) Be sure not to lose your temper, Thomas.

Dr. Stockmann. Oh, I know how to control myself. (*Looks at his watch, steps on to the platform, and bows.*) It is a quarter past—so I will begin. (*Takes his manuscript out of his pocket.*)

Aslaksen. I think we ought to elect a chairman first.

Dr. Stockmann. No, it is quite unnecessary.

Some of the Crowd. Yes—yes!

Peter Stockmann. I certainly think too that we ought to have a chairman.

Dr. Stockmann. But I have called this meeting to deliver a lecture, Peter.

Peter Stockmann. Dr. Stockmann's lecture may possibly lead to a considerable conflict of opinion.

Voices in the Crowd. A chairman! A chairman!

Hovstad. The general wish of the meeting seems to be that a chairman should be elected.

Dr. Stockmann (restraining himself). Very well—let the meeting have its way.

Aslaksen. Will the Mayor be good enough to undertake the task?

Three Men (clapping their hands). Bravo! Bravo!

Peter Stockmann. For various reasons, which you will easily understand, I must beg to be excused. But fortunately we have among us a man who I think will be acceptable to you all. I refer to the President of the Householders' Association, Mr. Aslaksen.

Several Voices. Yes—Aslaksen! Bravo Aslaksen!

DR. STOCKMANN takes up his manuscript and walks up and down the platform.

Aslaksen. Since my fellow citizens choose to entrust me with this duty, I cannot refuse.

Loud applause. ASLAKSEN mounts the platform.

Billing (writing). "Mr. Aslaksen was elected with enthusiasm."

Aslaksen. And now, as I am in this position, I should like to say a few brief words. I am a quiet and peaceable man, who believes in discreet moderation, and—and—in moderate discretion. All my friends can bear witness to that.

Several Voices. That's right! That's right, Aslaksen!

Aslaksen. I have learned in the school of life and experience that moderation is the most valuable virtue a citizen can possess—

Peter Stockmann. Hear, hear!

Aslaksen.—And moreover that discretion and moderation are what enable a man to be of most service to the community. I would therefore suggest to our esteemed fellow citizen, who has called this meeting,

that he should strive to keep strictly within the bounds of moderation.

A Man by the door. Three cheers for the Moderation Society!

A Voice. Shame!

Several Voices. Sh!–Sh!

Aslaksen. No interruptions, gentlemen, please! Does anyone wish to make any remarks?

Peter Stockmann. Mr. Chairman.

Aslaksen. The Mayor will address the meeting.

Peter Stockmann. In consideration of the close relationship in which, as you all know, I stand to the present Medical Officer of the Baths, I should have preferred not to speak this evening. But my official position with regard to the Baths and my solicitude for the vital interests of the town compel me to bring forward a motion. I venture to presume that there is not a single one of our citizens present who considers it desirable that unreliable and exaggerated accounts of the sanitary condition of the Baths and the town should be spread abroad.

Several Voices. No, no! Certainly not! We protest against it!

Peter Stockmann. Therefore I should like to propose that the meeting should not permit the Medical Officer either to read or to comment on his proposed lecture.

Dr. Stockmann (impatiently). Not permit! What the devil!

Mrs. Stockmann (coughing). Ahem!–ahem!

Dr. Stockmann (collecting himself). Very well. Go ahead!

Peter Stockmann. In my communication to the “People’s Messenger,” I have put the essential facts before the public in such a way that every fair-minded citizen can easily form his own opinion. From it you will see that the main result of the Medical Officer’s proposals—apart from their constituting a vote of censure on the leading men of the town—would be to saddle the ratepayers with an unnecessary expenditure of at least some thousands of pounds.

Sounds of disapproval among the audience, and some catcalls.

Aslaksen (ringing his bell). Silence, please, gentlemen! I beg to support the Mayor’s motion. I quite agree with him that there is something behind this agitation started by the Doctor. He talks about the Baths; but it is a revolution he is aiming at—he wants to get the administration of the town put into new hands. No one doubts the honesty of the Doctor’s intentions—no one will suggest that there can

be any two opinions as to that. I myself am a believer in self-government for the people, provided it does not fall too heavily on the ratepayers. But that would be the case here; and that is why I will see Dr. Stockmann damned—I beg your pardon—before I go with him in the matter. You can pay too dearly for a thing sometimes; that is my opinion.

Loud applause on all sides.

Hovstad. I, too, feel called upon to explain my position. Dr. Stockmann's agitation appeared to be gaining a certain amount of sympathy at first, so I supported it as impartially as I could. But presently we had reason to suspect that we had allowed ourselves to be misled by misrepresentation of the state of affairs—

Dr. Stockmann. Misrepresentation—!

Hovstad. Well, let us say a not entirely trustworthy representation. The Mayor's statement has proved that. I hope no one here has any doubt as to my liberal principles; the attitude of the "People's Messenger" towards important political questions is well known to everyone. But the advice of experienced and thoughtful men has convinced me that in purely local matters a newspaper ought to proceed with a certain caution.

Aslaksen. I entirely agree with the speaker.

Hovstad. And, in the matter before us, it is now an undoubted fact that Dr. Stockmann has public opinion against him. Now, what is an editor's first and most obvious duty, gentlemen? Is it not to work in harmony with his readers? Has he not received a sort of tacit mandate to work persistently and assiduously for the welfare of those whose opinions he represents? Or is it possible I am mistaken in that?

Voices from the crowd. No, no! You are quite right!

Hovstad. It has cost me a severe struggle to break with a man in whose house I have been lately a frequent guest—a man who till today has been able to pride himself on the undivided good will of his fellow citizens—a man whose only, or at all events whose essential, failing is that he is swayed by his heart rather than his head.

A few scattered voices. That is true! Bravo, Stockmann!

Hovstad. But my duty to the community obliged me to break with him. And there is another consideration that impels me to oppose him, and, as far as possible, to arrest him on the perilous course he has adopted; that is, consideration for his family—

Dr. Stockmann. Please stick to the water supply and drainage!

Hovstad.—consideration, I repeat, for his wife and his children for whom he has made no provision.

Morten. Is that us, mother?

Mrs. Stockmann. Hush!

Aslaksen. I will now put the Mayor's proposition to the vote.

Dr. Stockmann. There is no necessity! Tonight I have no intention of dealing with all that filth down at the Baths. No; I have something quite different to say to you.

Peter Stockmann (aside). What is coming now?

A Drunken Man (by the entrance door). I am a ratepayer! And therefore I have a right to speak too! And my entire—firm—inconceivable opinion is—

A number of voices. Be quiet, at the back there!

Others. He is drunk! Turn him out! (*They turn him out.*)

Dr. Stockmann. Am I allowed to speak?

Aslaksen (ringing his bell). Dr. Stockmann will address the meeting.

Dr. Stockmann. I should like to have seen anyone, a few days ago, dare to attempt to silence me as has been done tonight! I would have defended my sacred rights as a man, like a lion! But now it is all one to me; I have something of even weightier importance to say to you.

The crowd presses nearer to him, MORTEN KIIL conspicuous among them.

Dr. Stockmann (continuing). I have thought and pondered a great deal, these last few days—pondered over such a variety of things that in the end my head seemed too full to hold them—

Peter Stockmann (with a cough). Ahem!

Dr. Stockmann.—but I got them clear in my mind at last, and then I saw the whole situation lucidly. And that is why I am standing here tonight. I have a great revelation to make to you, my fellow citizens! I will impart to you a discovery of a far wider scope than the trifling matter that our water supply is poisoned and our medicinal Baths are standing on pestiferous soil.

A number of voices (shouting). Don't talk about the Baths! We won't hear you! None of that!

Dr. Stockmann. I have already told you that what I want to speak about is the great discovery I have made lately—the discovery that all the sources of our *moral* life are poisoned and that the whole fabric of our civic community is founded on the pestiferous soil of falsehood.

Voices of disconcerted Citizens. What is that he says?

Peter Stockmann. Such an insinuation—!

Aslaksen (with his hand on his bell). I call upon the speaker to moderate his language.

Dr. Stockmann. I have always loved my native town as a man only can love the home of his youthful days. I was not old when I went away from here; and exile, longing and memories cast as it were an additional halo over both the town and its inhabitants. (*Some clapping and applause.*) And there I stayed, for many years, in a horrible hole far away up north. When I came into contact with some of the people that lived scattered about among the rocks, I often thought it would of been more service to the poor half-starved creatures if a veterinary doctor had been sent up there, instead of a man like me. (*Murmurs among the crowd.*)

Billing (laying down his pen). I'm damned if I have ever heard—!

Hovstad. It is an insult to a respectable population!

Dr. Stockmann. Wait a bit! I do not think anyone will charge me with having forgotten my native town up there. I was like one of the eider ducks brooding on its nest, and what I hatched was—the plans for these Baths. (*Applause and protests.*) And then when fate at last decreed for me the great happiness of coming home again—I assure you, gentlemen, I thought I had nothing more in the world to wish for. Or rather, there was one thing I wished for—eagerly, untiringly, ardently—and that was to be able to be of service to my native town and the good of the community.

Peter Stockmann (looking at the ceiling). You chose a strange way of doing it—ahem!

Dr. Stockmann. And so, with my eyes blinded to the real facts, I reveled in happiness. But yesterday morning—no, to be precise, it was yesterday afternoon—the eyes of my mind were opened wide, and the first thing I realized was the colossal stupidity of the authorities—.

(*Uproar, shouts and laughter.* MRS. STOCKMANN coughs persistently.)

Peter Stockmann. Mr. Chairman!

Aslaksen (ringing his bell). By virtue of my authority—!

Dr. Stockmann. It is a petty thing to catch me up on a word, Mr. Aslaksen. What I mean is only that I got scent of the unbelievable piggishness our leading men had been responsible for down at the Baths. I can't stand leading men at any price!—I have had enough of such people in my time. They are like billy goats in a young plantation; they do mischief everywhere. They stand in a free man's way, which-

ever way he turns, and what I should like best would be up to see them exterminated like any other vermin—. (*Uproar.*)

Peter Stockmann. Mr. Chairman, can we allow such expressions to pass? *Aslaksen (with his hand on his bell).* Doctor—!

Dr. Stockmann. I cannot understand how it is that I have only now acquired a clear conception of what these gentry are, when I had almost daily before my eyes in this town such an excellent specimen of them—my brother Peter—slow-witted and hidebound in prejudice—.

Laughter, uproar and hisses. MRS. STOCKMANN sits coughing assiduously. ASLAKSEN rings his bell violently.

The Drunken Man (who has got in again). Is it me he is talking about? My name's Petersen, all right—but devil take me if I—

Angry Voices. Turn out that drunken man! Turn him out. (*He is turned out again.*)

Peter Stockmann. Who was that person?

1st Citizen. I don't know who he is, Mr. Mayor.

2nd Citizen. He doesn't belong here.

3rd Citizen. I expect he is a navvy from over at (*the rest is audible*).

Aslaksen. He had obviously had too much beer. Proceed, Doctor; but please strive to be moderate in your language.

Dr. Stockmann. Very well, gentlemen, I will say no more about our leading men. And if anyone imagines, from what I have just said, that my object is to attack these people this evening, he is wrong—absolutely wide of the mark. For I cherish the comforting conviction that these parasites—all these venerable relics of a dying school of thought—are most admirably paving the way for their own extinction; they need no doctor's help to hasten their end. Nor is it folk of that kind who constitute the most pressing danger to the community. It is not they who are most instrumental in poisoning the sources of our moral life and infecting the ground on which we stand. It is not they who are the most dangerous enemies of truth and freedom among us.

Shouts from all sides. Who then? Who is it? Name! Name!

Dr. Stockmann. You may depend upon it I shall name them! That is precisely the great discovery I made yesterday. (*Raises his voice.*) The most dangerous enemy of truth and freedom among us is the compact majority—yes, the damned compact Liberal majority—that is it! Now you know!

Tremendous uproar. Most of the crowd are shouting, stamping and hissing. Some of the older men among them exchange stolen glances

and seem to be enjoying themselves. MRS. STOCKMANN gets up, looking anxious. EJLIF and MORTEN advance threateningly upon some schoolboys who are playing pranks. ASLAKSEN rings his bell and begs for silence. HOVSTAD and BILLING both talk at once, but are inaudible. At last quiet is restored.

Aslaksen. As chairman, I call upon the speaker to withdraw the ill-considered expressions he has just used.

Dr. Stockmann. Never, Mr. Aslaksen! It is the majority in our community that denies me my freedom and seeks to prevent my speaking the truth.

Hovstad. The majority always has right on its side.

Billing. And truth too, by God!

Dr. Stockmann. The majority *never* has right on its side. Never, I say! That is one of these social lies against which an independent, intelligent man must wage war. Who is it that constitute the majority of the population in a country? Is it the clever folk or the stupid? I don't imagine you will dispute the fact that at present the stupid people are in an absolutely overwhelming majority all the world over. But, good Lord!—you can never pretend that it is right that the stupid folk should govern the clever ones! (*Uproar and cries.*) Oh, yes—you can shout me down, I know! but you cannot answer me. The majority has *might* on its side—unfortunately; but *right* it has *not*. I am in the right—I and a few other scattered individuals. The minority is always in the right. (*Renewed uproar.*)

Hovstad. Aha!—so Dr. Stockmann has become an aristocrat since the day before yesterday!

Dr. Stockmann. I have already said that I don't intend to waste a word on the puny, narrow-chested, short-winded crew whom we are leaving astern. Pulsating life no longer concerns itself with them. I am thinking of the few, the scattered few among us, who have absorbed new and vigorous truths. Such men stand, as it were, at the outposts, so far ahead that the compact majority has not yet been able to come up with them; and there they are fighting for truths that are too newly born into the world of consciousness to have any considerable number of people on their side as yet.

Hovstad. So the Doctor is a revolutionary now!

Dr. Stockmann. Good heavens—of course I am, Mr. Hovstad! I propose to raise a revolution against the lie that the majority has the monopoly of the truth. What sort of truths are they that the majority usually

supports? They are truths that are of such advanced age that they are beginning to break up. And if a truth is as old as that, it is also in a fair way to become a lie, gentlemen. (*Laughter and mocking cries.*) Yes, believe me or not, as you like; but truths are by no means as long-lived as Methuselah—as some folk imagine. A normally constituted truth lives, let us say, as a rule seventeen or eighteen, or at most twenty years; seldom longer. But truths as aged as that are always worn frightfully thin, and nevertheless it is only then that the majority recognizes them and recommends them to the community as wholesome moral nourishment. There is no great nutritive value in that sort of fare, I can assure you; and, as a doctor, I ought to know. These “majority truths” are like last year’s cured meat—like rancid, tainted ham; and they are the origin of the moral scurvy that is rampant in our communities.

Aslaksen. It appears to me that the speaker is wandering a long way from his subject.

Peter Stockmann. I quite agree with the Chairman.

Dr. Stockmann. Have you gone clean out of your senses, Peter? I am sticking as closely to my subject as I can; for my subject is precisely this, that it is the masses, the majority—this infernal compact majority—that poisons the sources of our moral life and infects the ground we stand on.

Hovstad. And all this because the great, broad-minded majority of the people is prudent enough to show deference only to well-ascertained and well-approved truths?

Dr. Stockmann. Ah, my good Mr. Hovstad, don’t talk nonsense about well-ascertained truths! The truths of which the masses now approve are the very truths that the fighters at the outposts held to in the days of our grandfathers. We fighters at the outposts nowadays no longer approve of them; and I do not believe there is any other well-ascertained truth except this, that no community can live a healthy life if it is nourished only on such old marrowless truths.

Hovstad. But instead of standing there using vague generalities, it would be interesting if you would tell us what these old marrowless truths are, that we are nourished on.

Applause from many quarters.

Dr. Stockmann. Oh, I could give you a whole string of such abominations; but to begin with I will confine myself to one well-approved truth, which at bottom is a foul lie, but upon which nevertheless

Mr. Hovstad and the “People’s Messenger” and all the “Messenger’s” supporters are nourished.

Hovstad. And that is—?

Dr. Stockmann. That is, the doctrine you have inherited from your forefathers and proclaim thoughtlessly far and wide—the doctrine that the public, the crowd, the masses, are the essential part of the population—that they constitute the People—that the common folk, the ignorant and incomplete element in the community, have the same right to pronounce judgment and to approve, to direct and to govern, as the isolated, intellectually superior personalities in it.

Billing. Well, damn me if ever I—

Hovstad (*at the same time, shouting out*). Fellow citizens, take good note of that!

A number of voices (angrily). Oho!—we are not the People! Only the superior folk are to govern, are they!

A Workman. Turn the fellow out, for talking such rubbish!

Another. Out with him!

Another (calling out). Blow your horn, Evensen!

A horn is blown loudly, amidst hisses and an angry uproar.

Dr. Stockmann (when the noise has somewhat abated). Be reasonable! Can’t you stand hearing the voice of truth for once? I don’t in the least expect you to agree with me all at once; but I must say I did expect Mr. Hovstad to admit I was right, when he had recovered his composure a little. He claims to be a freethinker—

Voices (in murmurs of astonishment). Freethinker, did he say? Is Hovstad a freethinker?

Hovstad (shouting). Prove it, Dr. Stockmann! When have I said so in print?

Dr. Stockmann (reflecting). No, confound it, you are right!—you have never had the courage to. Well, I won’t put you in a hole, Mr. Hovstad. Let us say it is I that am the freethinker, then. I am going to prove to you, scientifically, that the “People’s Messenger” leads you by the nose in a shameful manner when it tells you that you—that the common people, the crowd, the masses, are the real essence of the People. That is only a newspaper lie, I tell you! The common people are nothing more than the raw material of which a People is made. (*Groans, laughter and uproar.*) Well, isn’t that the case? Isn’t there an enormous difference between a well-bred and an ill-bred strain of animals? Take, for instance, a common barn-door hen. What sort of

eating do you get from a shrivelled up old scrag of a fowl like that? Not much, do you! And what sort of eggs does it lay? A fairly good crow or a raven can lay pretty nearly as good an egg. But take a well-bred Spanish or Japanese hen, or a good pheasant or a turkey—then you will see the difference. Or take the case of dogs, with whom we humans are on such intimate terms. Think first of an ordinary common cur—I mean one of the horrible, coarse-haired, low-bred curs that do nothing but run about the streets and befoul the walls of the houses. Compare one of these curs with a poodle whose sires for many generations have been bred in a gentleman's house, where they have had the best of food and had the opportunity of hearing soft voices and music. Do you not think that the poodle's brain is developed to quite a different degree from that of the cur? Of course it is. It is puppies of well-bred poodles like that, that showmen train to do incredibly clever tricks—things that a common cur could never learn to do even if it stood on its head. (*Uproar and mocking cries.*)

A Citizen (calls out). Are you going to make out we are dogs, now?

Another Citizen. We are not animals, Doctor!

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, but, bless my soul, we *are*, my friend! It is true we are the finest animals anyone could wish for; but, even among us, exceptionally fine animals are rare. There is a tremendous difference between poodle-men and cur-men. And the amusing part of it is, that Mr. Hovstad quite agrees with me as long as it is a question of four-footed animals—

Hovstad. Yes, it is true enough as far as they are concerned.

Dr. Stockmann. Very well. But as soon as I extend the principle and apply it to two-legged animals, Mr. Hovstad stops short. He no longer dares to think independently, or to pursue his ideas to their logical conclusion; so he turns the whole theory upside down and proclaims in the “People’s Messenger” that it is the barn-door hens and street curs that are the finest specimens in the menagerie. But that is always the way, as long as a man retains the traces of common origin and has not worked his way up to intellectual distinction.

Hovstad. I lay no claim to any sort of distinction. I am the son of humble countryfolk, and I am proud that the stock I come from is rooted deep among the common people he insults!

Voices. Bravo, Hovstad! Bravo! Bravo!

Dr. Stockmann. The kind of common people I mean are not only to be found low down in the social scale; they crawl and swarm all around us—even in the highest social positions. You have only to look at your

own fine, distinguished Mayor! My brother Peter is every bit as plebeian as anyone that walks in two shoes—(*laughter and hisses*).

Peter Stockmann. I protest against personal allusions of this kind.

Dr. Stockmann (imperturbably). —and that, not because he is, like myself, descended from some old rascal of a pirate from Pomerania or thereabouts—because that is who we are descended from—

Peter Stockmann. An absurd legend. I deny it!

Dr. Stockmann. —but because he thinks what his superiors think and holds the same opinions as they. People who do that are, intellectually speaking, common people; and that is why my magnificent brother Peter is in reality so very far from any distinction—and consequently also so far from being liberal-minded.

Peter Stockmann. Mr. Chairman—!

Hovstad. So it is only the distinguished men that are liberal-minded in this country? We are learning something quite new! (*Laughter*.)

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, that is part of my new discovery too. And another part of it is that broad-mindedness is almost precisely the same thing as morality. That is why I maintain that it is absolutely inexcusable in the “People’s Messenger” to proclaim, day in and day out, the false doctrine that it is the masses, the crowd, the compact majority, that have the monopoly of broad-mindedness and morality—and that vice and corruption and every kind of intellectual depravity are the result of culture, just as all the filth that is draining into our Baths is the result of the tanneries up at Mölledal! (*Uproar and interruptions. DR. STOCKMANN is undisturbed, and goes on, carried away by his ardor, with a smile.*) And yet this same “People’s Messenger” can go on preaching that the masses ought to be elevated to higher conditions of life! But, bless my soul, if the “Messenger’s” teaching is to be depended upon, this very raising up the masses would mean nothing more or less than setting them straightway upon the paths of depravity! Happily the theory that culture demoralizes is only an old falsehood that our forefathers believed in and we have inherited. No, it is ignorance, poverty, ugly conditions of life, that do the devil’s work! In a house which does not get aired and swept every day—my wife Katherine maintains that the floor ought to be scrubbed as well, but that is a debatable question—in such a house, let me tell you, people will lose within two or three years the power of thinking or acting in a moral manner. Lack of oxygen weakens the conscience. And there must be a plentiful lack

of oxygen in very many houses in this town, I should think, judging from the fact that the whole compact majority can be unconscientious enough to wish to build the town's prosperity on a quagmire of falsehood and deceit.

Aslaksen. We cannot allow such a grave accusation to be flung at a citizen community.

A Citizen. I move that the Chairman direct the speaker to sit down.

Voices (angrily). Hear, hear! Quite right! Make him sit down!

Dr. Stockmann (losing his self-control). Then I will go and shout the truth at every street corner! I will write it in other towns' newspapers! The whole country shall know what is going on here!

Hovstad. It almost seems as if Dr. Stockmann's intention were to ruin the town.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, my native town is so dear to me that I would rather ruin it than see it flourishing upon a lie.

Aslaksen. This is really serious.

Uproar and catcalls. MRS. STOCKMANN coughs, but to no purpose; her husband does not listen to her any longer.

Hovstad (shouting above the din). A man must be a public enemy to wish to ruin a whole community!

Dr. Stockmann (with growing fervor). What does the destruction of a community matter, if it lives on lies! It ought to be razed to the ground, I tell you! All who live by lies ought to be exterminated like vermin! You will end by infecting the whole country; you will bring about such a state of things that the whole country will deserve to be ruined. And if things come to that pass, I shall say from the bottom of my heart: Let the whole country perish, let all these people be exterminated!

Voices from the crowd. That is talking like an out-and-out enemy of the people!

Billing. There sounded the voice of the people, by all that's holy!

The whole crowd (shouting). Yes, yes! He is an enemy of the people! He hates his country! He hates his own people!

Aslaksen. Both as a citizen and as an individual, I am profoundly disturbed by what we have had to listen to. Dr. Stockmann has shown himself in a light I should never have dreamed of. I am unhappily obliged to subscribe to the opinion which I have just heard my estimable fellow citizens utter; and I propose that we should give ex-

pression to that opinion in a resolution. I propose a resolution as follows: "This meeting declares that it considers Dr. Thomas Stockmann, Medical Officer of the Baths, to be an enemy of the people."

A storm of cheers and applause. A number of men surround the DOCTOR and hiss him. MRS. STOCKMANN and PETRA have got up from their seats. MORTEN and EJLIF are fighting the other schoolboys for hissing; some of their elders separate them.

Dr. Stockmann (to the men who are hissing him). Oh, you fools! I tell you that—

Aslaksen (ringing his bell). We cannot hear you now, Doctor. A formal vote is about to be taken; but, out of regard for personal feelings, it shall be by ballot and not verbal. Have you any clean paper, Mr. Billing?

Billing. I have both blue and white here.

Aslaksen (going to him). That will do nicely; we shall get on more quickly that way. Cut it up into small strips—yes, that's it. (*To the meeting.*) Blue means no; white means yes. I will come round myself and collect votes.

PETER STOCKMANN leaves the hall. ASLAKSEN and one or two others go round the room with the slips of paper in their hats.

1st Citizen (to HOVSTAD). I say, what has come to the Doctor? What are we to think of it?

Hovstad. Oh, you know how headstrong he is.

2nd Citizen (to BILLING). Billing, you go to their house—have you ever noticed if the fellow drinks?

Billing. Well, I'm hanged if I know what to say. There are always spirits on the table when you go.

3rd Citizen. I rather think he goes quite off his head sometimes.

1st Citizen. I wonder if there is any madness in his family?

Billing. I shouldn't wonder if there were.

4th Citizen. No, it is nothing more than sheer malice; he wants to get even with somebody for something or other.

Billing. Well, certainly he suggested a rise in his salary on one occasion lately, and did not get it.

The Citizens (together). Ah!—then it is easy to understand how it is!

The Drunken Man (who has got amongst the audience again). I want a blue one, I do! And I want a white one too!

Voices. It's that drunken chap again! Turn him out!

Morten Kiil (going up to DR. STOCKMANN). Well, Stockmann, do you see what these monkey tricks of yours lead to?

Dr. Stockmann. I have done my duty.

Morten Kiil. What was that you said about the tanneries at Mölledal?

Dr. Stockmann. You heard well enough. I said they were the source of all the filth.

Morten Kiil. My tannery too?

Dr. Stockmann. Unfortunately your tannery is by far the worst.

Morten Kiil. Are you going to put that in the papers?

Dr. Stockmann. I shall conceal nothing.

Morten Kiil. That may cost you dear, Stockmann. (*Goes out.*)

A Stout Man (going up to CAPTAIN HORSTER, without taking any notice of the ladies). Well, Captain, so you lend your house to enemies of the people?

Horster. I imagine I can do what I like with my own possessions, Mr. Vik.

The Stout Man. Then you can have no objection to my doing the same with mine.

Horster. What do you mean, sir?

The Stout Man. You shall hear from me in the morning. (*Turns his back on him and moves off.*)

Petra. Was that not your owner, Captain Horster?

Horster. Yes, that was Mr. Vik the shipowner.

Aslaksen (with the voting papers in his hands, gets up on to the platform and rings his bell). Gentlemen, allow me to announce the result. By the votes of every one here except one person—

A Young Man. That is the drunk chap!

Aslaksen. By the votes of every one here except a tipsy man, this meeting of citizens declares Dr. Thomas Stockmann to be an enemy of the people.

(Shouts and applause.) Three cheers for our ancient and honorable citizen community! (Renewed applause.) Three cheers for our able and energetic Mayor, who has so loyally suppressed the promptings of family feeling! (Cheers.) The meeting is dissolved. (*Gets down.*)

Billing. Three cheers for the Chairman!

The whole crowd. Three cheers for Aslaksen! Hurrah!

Dr. Stockmann. My hat and coat, Petra! Captain, have you room on your ship for passengers to the New World?

Horster. For you and yours we will make room, Doctor.

Dr. Stockmann (as PETRA helps him into his coat). Good. Come, Katherine! Come, boys!

Mrs. Stockmann (in an undertone). Thomas, dear, let us go out by the back way.

Dr. Stockmann. No back ways for me, Katherine. (*Raising his voice.*) You will hear more of this enemy of the people, before he shakes the dust off his shoes upon you! I am not so forgiving as a certain Person; I do not say: "I forgive you, for ye know not what ye do."

Aslaksen (shouting). That is a blasphemous comparison, Dr. Stockmann!

Billing. It is, by God! It's dreadful for an earnest man to listen to.

A Coarse Voice. Threatens us now, does he!

Other Voices (excitedly). Let's go and break his windows! Duck him in the fjord!

Another Voice. Blow your horn, Evensen. Pip, pip!

Horn-blowing, hisses, and wild cries. DR. STOCKMANN goes out through the hall with his family, HORSTER elbowing a way for them.

The Whole Crowd (howling after them as they go). Enemy of the People! Enemy of the People!

Billing (as he puts his papers together). Well, I'm damned if I go and drink toddy with the Stockmanns tonight!

The crowd press towards the exit. The uproar continues outside; shouts of "Enemy of the People!" are heard from without.

ACT V

SCENE. DR. STOCKMANN'S study. Bookcases, and cabinets containing specimens, line the walls. At the back is a door leading to the hall; in the foreground on the left, a door leading to the sitting room. In the right-hand wall are two windows, of which all the panes are broken. The DOCTOR'S desk, littered with books and papers, stands in the middle of the room, which is in disorder. It is morning. DR. STOCKMANN in dressing gown, slippers and a smoking cap, is bending down and raking with an umbrella under one of the cabinets. After a little while he rakes out a stone.

Dr. Stockmann (calling through the open sitting room door). Katherine, I have found another one.

Mrs. Stockmann (from the sitting room). Oh, you will find a lot more yet, I expect.

Dr. Stockmann (adding the stone to a heap of others on the table). I shall

treasure these stones as relics. Ejlf and Morten shall look at them every day, and when they are grown up they shall inherit them as heirlooms. (*Rakes about under a bookcase.*) Hasn't—what the deuce is her name?—the girl, you know—hasn't she been to fetch the glazier, yet?

Mrs. Stockmann (coming in). Yes, but he said he didn't know if he would be able to come today.

Dr. Stockmann. You will see he won't dare to come.

Mrs. Stockmann. Well, that is just what Randine thought—that he didn't dare to, on account of the neighbors. (*Calls into the sitting room.*) What is it you want, Randine? Give it to me. (*Goes in, and comes out again directly.*) Here is a letter for you, Thomas.

Dr. Stockmann. Let me see it. (*Opens and reads it.*) Ah!—of course.

Mrs. Stockmann. Who is it from?

Dr. Stockmann. From the landlord. Notice to quit.

Mrs. Stockmann. Is it possible? Such a nice man—

Dr. Stockmann (looking at the letter). Does not dare do otherwise, he says. Doesn't like doing it, but dare not do otherwise—on account of his fellow citizens—out of regard for public opinion. Is in a dependent position—dare not offend certain influential men—

Mrs. Stockmann. There, you see, Thomas!

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, yes, I see well enough; the whole lot of them in the town are cowards; not a man among them dares do anything for fear of the others. (*Throws the letter on to the table.*) But it doesn't matter to us, Katherine. We are going to sail away to the New World, and—

Mrs. Stockmann. But, Thomas, are you sure we are well advised to take this step?

Dr. Stockmann. Are you suggesting that I should stay here, where they have pilloried me as an enemy of the people—branded me—broken my windows! And just look here, Katherine—they have torn a great rent in my black trousers too!

Mrs. Stockmann. Oh, dear!—and they are the best pair you have got!

Dr. Stockmann. You should never wear your best trousers when you go out to fight for freedom and truth. It is not that I care so much about the trousers, you know; you can always sew them up again for me. But that the common herd should dare to make this attack on me, as if they were my equals—that is what I cannot, for the life of me, swallow!

Mrs. Stockmann. There is no doubt they have behaved very ill to you,

Thomas; but is that sufficient reason for our leaving our native country for good and all?

Dr. Stockmann. If we went to another town, do you suppose we should not find the common people just as insolent as they are here? Depend upon it, there is not much to choose between them. Oh, well, let the curs snap—that is not the worst part of it. The worst is that, from one end of this country to the other, every man is the slave of his Party. Although, as far as that goes, I dare say it is not much better in the free West either; the compact majority, and liberal public opinion, and all that infernal old bag of tricks are probably rampant there too. But there things are done on a larger scale, you see. They may kill you, but they won't put you to death by slow torture. They don't squeeze a free man's soul in a vise, as they do here. And, if need be, one can live in solitude. (*Walks up and down.*) If only I knew where there was a virgin forest or a small South Sea island for sale, cheap—

Mrs. Stockmann. But think of the boys, Thomas.

Dr. Stockmann (standing still). What a strange woman you are, Katherine! Would you prefer to have the boys grow up in a society like this? You saw for yourself last night that half the population are out of their minds; and if the other half have not lost their senses, it is because they are mere brutes, with no sense to lose.

Mrs. Stockmann. But, Thomas dear, the imprudent things you said had something to do with it, you know.

Dr. Stockmann. Well, isn't what I said perfectly true? Don't they turn every idea topsy-turvy? Don't they make a regular hotchpotch of right and wrong? Don't they say that the things I know are true, are lies? The craziest part of it all is the fact of these "liberal," men of full age, going about in crowds imagining that they are the broadminded party! Did you ever hear anything like it, Katherine!

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, yes, it's mad enough of them, certainly; but—(*PETRA comes in from the sitting room.*) Back from school already?

Petra. Yes. I have been given notice of dismissal.

Mrs. Stockmann. Dismissal?

Dr. Stockmann. You too?

Petra. Mrs. Busk gave me my notice; so I thought it was best to go at once.

Dr. Stockmann. You were perfectly right, too!

Mrs. Stockmann. Who would have thought Mrs. Busk was a woman like that!

Petra. Mrs. Busk isn't a bit like that, mother; I saw quite plainly how it

hurt her to do it. But she didn't dare do otherwise, she said; and so I got my notice.

Dr. Stockmann (laughing and rubbing his hands). She didn't dare do otherwise, either! It's delicious!

Mrs. Stockmann. Well, after the dreadful scenes last night—

Petra. It was not only that. Just listen to this, father!

Dr. Stockmann. Well?

Petra. Mrs. Busk showed me no less than three letters she received this morning—

Dr. Stockmann. Anonymous, I suppose?

Petra. Yes.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, because they didn't dare to risk signing their names, Katherine!

Petra. And two of them were to the effect that a man, who has been our guest here, was declaring last night at the Club that my views on various subjects are extremely emancipated—

Dr. Stockmann. You did not deny that, I hope?

Petra. No, you know I wouldn't. Mrs. Busk's own views are tolerably emancipated, when we are alone together; but now that this report about me is being spread, she dare not keep me on any longer.

Mrs. Stockmann. And some one who had been a guest of ours! That shows you the return you get for your hospitality Thomas!

Dr. Stockmann. We won't live in such a disgusting hole any longer. Pack up as quickly as you can, Katherine; the sooner we can get away, the better.

Mrs. Stockmann. Be quiet—I think I hear someone in the hall. See who it is, Petra.

Petra (opening the door). Oh, it's you, Captain Horster! Do come in.

Horster (coming in). Good morning. I thought I would just come in and see how you were.

Dr. Stockmann (shaking his hand). Thanks—that is really kind of you.

Mrs. Stockmann. And thank you, too, for helping us through the crowd, Captain Horster.

Petra. How did you manage to get home again?

Horster. Oh, somehow or other. I am fairly strong, and there is more sound than fury about these folk.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, isn't their swinish cowardice astonishing? Look here, I will show you something! There are all the stones they have thrown through my windows. Just look at them! I'm hanged if there are more than two decently large bits of hardstone in the whole heap; the rest

are nothing but gravel-wretched little things. And yet they stood out there bawling and swearing that they would do me some violence; but as for *doing* anything—you don't see much of that in this town.

Horster. Just as well for you this time, doctor!

Dr. Stockmann. True enough. But it makes one angry all the same; because if some day it should be a question of a national fight in real earnest, you will see that public opinion will be in favor of taking to one's heels, and the compact majority will turn tail like a flock of sheep, Captain Horster. That is what is so mournful to think of; it gives me so much concern, that—. No, devil take it, it is ridiculous to care about it! They have called me an enemy of the people, so an enemy of the people let me be!

Mrs. Stockmann. You will never be that, Thomas.

Dr. Stockmann. Don't swear to that, Katherine. To be called an ugly name may have the same effect as a pin scratch in the lung. And that hateful name—I can't get quit of it. It is sticking here in the pit of my stomach, eating into me like a corrosive acid. And no magnesia will remove it.

Petra. Bah!—you should only laugh at them, father.

Horster. They will change their minds some day, Doctor.

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, Thomas, as sure as you are standing here.

Dr. Stockmann. Perhaps, when it is too late. Much good may it do them! They may wallow in their filth then and rue the day when they drove a patriot into exile. When do you sail, Captain Horster?

Horster. Hm!—that was just what I had come to speak about—

Dr. Stockmann. Why, has anything gone wrong with the ship?

Horster. No; but what has happened is that I am not to sail in it.

Petra. Do you mean that you have been dismissed from your command?

Horster (smiling). Yes, that's just it.

Petra. You too.

Mrs. Stockmann. There, you see, Thomas!

Dr. Stockmann. And that for the truth's sake! Oh, if I had thought such a thing possible—

Horster. You mustn't take it to heart; I shall be sure to find a job with some shipowner or other, elsewhere.

Dr. Stockmann. And that is this man Vik—a wealthy man, independent of everyone and everything! Shame on him!

Horster. He is quite an excellent fellow otherwise; he told me himself he would willingly have kept me on, if only he had dared—

Dr. Stockmann. But he didn't dare? No, of course not.

Horster. It is not such an easy matter, he said, for a party man—

Dr. Stockmann. The worthy man spoke the truth. A party is like a sausage machine; it mashes up all sorts of heads together into the same mincemeat—fatheads and blockheads, all in one mash!

Mrs. Stockmann. Come, come, Thomas dear!

Petra (to HORSTER). If only you had not come home with us, things might not have come to this pass.

Horster. I do not regret it.

Petra (holding out her hand to him). Thank you for that!

Horster (to DR. STOCKMANN). And so what I came to say was that if you are determined to go away, I have thought of another plan—

Dr. Stockmann. That's splendid!—if only we can get away at once.

Mrs. Stockmann. Hush!—wasn't that some one knocking?

Petra. That is uncle, surely.

Dr. Stockmann. Aha! (*Calls out.*) Come in!

Mrs. Stockmann. Dear Thomas, promise me definitely—

PETER STOCKMANN comes in from the hall.

Peter Stockmann. Oh, you are engaged. In that case, I will—

Dr. Stockmann. No, no, come in.

Peter Stockmann. But I wanted to speak to you alone.

Mrs. Stockmann. We will go into the sitting room in the meanwhile.

Horster. And I will look in again later.

Dr. Stockmann. No, go in there with them, Captain Horster; I want to hear more about—

Horster. Very well, I will wait, then. (*He follows MRS. STOCKMANN and PETRA into the sitting room.*)

Dr. Stockmann. I daresay you find it rather drafty here today. Put your hat on.

Peter Stockmann. Thank you, if I may. (*Does so.*) I think I caught cold last night; I stood and shivered—

Dr. Stockmann. Really? I found it warm enough.

Peter Stockmann. I regret that it was not in my power to prevent those excesses last night.

Dr. Stockmann. Have you anything particular to say to me besides that?

Peter Stockmann (taking a big letter from his pocket). I have this document for you, from the Baths Committee.

Dr. Stockmann. My dismissal?

Peter Stockmann. Yes, dating from today. (*Lays the letter on the table.*) It gives us pain to do it; but, to speak frankly, we dared not do otherwise on account of public opinion.

Dr. Stockmann (smiling). Dared not? I seem to have heard that word before, today.

Peter Stockmann. I must beg you to understand your position clearly. For the future you must not count on any practice whatever in the town.

Dr. Stockmann. Devil take the practice! But why are you so sure of that?

Peter Stockmann. The Householders' Association is circulating a list from house to house. All right-minded citizens are being called upon to give up employing you; and I can assure you that not a single head of a family will risk refusing his signature. They simply dare not.

Dr. Stockmann. No, no; I don't doubt it. But what then?

Peter Stockmann. If I might advise you, it would be best to leave the place for a little while—

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, the propriety of leaving the place *has* occurred to me.

Peter Stockmann. Good. And then, when you have had six months to think things over, if, after mature consideration, you can persuade yourself to write a few words of regret, acknowledging your error—

Dr. Stockmann. I might have my appointment restored to me, do you mean?

Peter Stockmann. Perhaps. It is not at all impossible.

Dr. Stockmann. But what about public opinion, then? Surely you would not dare to do it on account of public feeling.

Peter Stockmann. Public opinion is an extremely mutable thing. And, to be quite candid with you, it is a matter of great importance to us to have some admission of that sort from you in writing.

Dr. Stockmann. Oh, that's what you are after, is it! I will just trouble you to remember what I said to you lately about foxy tricks of that sort!

Peter Stockmann. Your position was quite different then. At that time you had reason to suppose you had the whole town at your back—

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, and now I feel I have the whole town *on* my back—(*flaring up*). I would not do it if I had the devil and his dam on my back! Never—never, I tell you!

Peter Stockmann. A man with a family has no right to behave as you do. You have no right to do it, Thomas.

Dr. Stockmann. I have no right! There is only one single thing in the world a free man has no right to do. Do you know what that is?

Peter Stockmann. No.

Dr. Stockmann. Of course you don't, but I will tell you. A free man has no right to soil himself with filth; he has no right to behave in a way that would justify his spitting in his own face.

Peter Stockmann. This sort of thing sounds extremely plausible, of course; and if there were no other explanation for your obstinacy—. But as it happens that there is—

Dr. Stockmann. What do you mean?

Peter Stockmann. You understand very well what I mean. But, as your brother and as a man of discretion, I advise you not to build too much upon expectations and prospects that may so very easily fail you.

Dr. Stockmann. What in the world is all this about?

Peter Stockmann. Do you really ask me to believe that you are ignorant of the terms of Mr. Kiil's will?

Dr. Stockmann. I know that the small amount he possesses is to go to an institution for indigent old workpeople. How does that concern me?

Peter Stockmann. In the first place, it is by no means a small amount that is in question. Mr. Kiil is a fairly wealthy man.

Dr. Stockmann. I had no notion of that!

Peter Stockmann. Hm!—hadn't you really? Then I suppose you had no notion, either, that a considerable portion of his wealth will come to your children, you and your wife having a different of the capital. Has he never told you so?

Dr. Stockmann. Never, on my honor! Quite the reverse; he has consistently done nothing but fume at being so unconscionably heavily taxed. But are you perfectly certain of this, Peter?

Peter Stockmann. I have it from an absolutely reliable source.

Dr. Stockmann. Then, thank God, Katherine is provided for—and the children too! I must tell her this at once—(*calls out*) Katherine, Katherine!

Peter Stockmann (restraining him). Hush, don't say a word yet!

Mrs. Stockmann (opening the door). What is the matter?

Dr. Stockmann. Oh, nothing, nothing; you can go back. (*She shuts the door.*

DR. STOCKMANN walks up and down in his excitement.) Provided for!— Just think of it, we are all provided for. And for life! What a blessed feeling it is to know one is provided for!

Peter Stockmann. Yes, but that is just exactly what you are not. Mr. Kiil can alter his will any day he likes.

Dr. Stockmann. But he won't do that, my dear Peter. "The Badger" is much too delighted at my attack on you and your wise friends.

Peter Stockmann (starts and looks intently at him). Ah, that throws a light on various things.

Dr. Stockmann. What things?

Peter Stockmann. I see that the whole thing was a combined maneuver on

your part and his. These violent, reckless attacks that you have made against the leading men of the town, under the pretense that it was in the name of truth—

Dr. Stockmann. What about them?

Peter Stockmann. I see that they were nothing else than the stipulated price for that vindictive old man's will.

Dr. Stockmann (almost speechless). Peter—you are the most disgusting plebeian I have ever met in all my life.

Peter Stockmann. All is over between us. Your dismissal is irrevocable—we have a weapon against you now. (*Goes out.*)

Dr. Stockmann. For shame! For shame! (*Calls out.*) Katherine, you must have the floor scrubbed after him! Let—what's her name—devil take it, the girl who has always got soot on her nose—

Mrs. Stockmann (in the sitting room). Hush, Thomas, be quiet!

Petra (coming to the door). Father, grandfather is here, asking if he may speak to you alone.

Dr. Stockmann. Certainly he may. (*Going to the door.*) Come in, Mr. Kiil. (*MORTEN KIIL comes in. DR. STOCKMANN shuts the door after him.*) What can I do for you? Won't you sit down?

Morten Kiil. I won't sit. (*Looks around.*) You look very comfortable here today, Thomas.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, don't we!

Morten Kiil. Very comfortable—plenty of fresh air. I should think you have got enough today of that oxygen you were talking about yesterday. Your conscience must be in splendid order today, I should think.

Dr. Stockmann. It is.

Morten Kiil So I should think. (*Taps his chest.*) Do you know what I have got here?

Dr. Stockmann. A good conscience, too, I hope.

Morten Kiil. Bah! No, it is something better than that. (*He takes a thick pocketbook from his breast pocket, opens it and displays a packet of papers.*)

Dr. Stockmann (looking at him in astonishment). Shares in the Baths?

Morten Kiil They were not difficult to get today.

Dr. Stockmann. And you have been buying—?

Morten Kiil. As many as I could pay for.

Dr. Stockmann. But, my dear Mr. Kiil—consider the state of the Baths' affairs!

Morten Kiil. If you behave like a reasonable man, you can soon set the Baths on their feet again.

Dr. Stockmann. Well, you can see for yourself that I have done all I can, but—. They are all mad in this town!

Morten Kiil. You said yesterday that the worst of this pollution came from my tannery. If that is true, then my grandfather and my father before me, and I myself, for many years past, have been poisoning the town like three destroying angels. Do you think I am going to sit quiet under that reproach?

Dr. Stockmann. Unfortunately I am afraid you will have to.

Morten Kiil. No, thank you. I am jealous of my name and reputation. They call me “the Badger,” I am told. A badger is a kind of pig, I believe; but I am not going to give them the right to call me that. I mean to live and die a clean man.

Dr. Stockmann. And how are you going to set about it?

Morten Kiil. You shall cleanse me, Thomas.

Dr. Stockmann. II

Morten Kiil. Do you know what money I have bought these shares with?

No, of course you can’t know—but I will tell you. It is the money that Katherine and Petra and the boys will have when I am gone. Because I have been able to save a little bit after all, you know.

Dr. Stockmann (flaring up). And you have gone and taken Katherine’s money for this!

Morten Kiil. Yes, the whole of the money is invested in the Baths now. And now I just want to see whether you are quite stark, staring mad, Thomas! If you still make out that these animals and other nasty things of that sort come from my tannery, it will be exactly as if you were to flay broad strips of skin from Katherine’s body, and Petra’s, and the boys’; and no decent man would do that—unless he were mad.

Dr. Stockmann (walking up and down). Yes, but I *am* mad; I *am* mad!

Morten Kiil. You cannot be so absurdly mad as all that, when it is a question of your wife and children.

Dr. Stockmann (standing still in front of him). Why couldn’t you consult me about it, before you went and bought all that trash?

Morten Kiil. What is done cannot be undone.

Dr. Stockmann (walks about uneasily). If only I were not so certain about it—! But I am absolutely convinced that I am right.

Morten Kiil (weighing the pocketbook in his hand). If you stick to your mad idea, this won’t be worth much, you know. (*Puts the pocketbook in his pocket.*)

Dr. Stockmann. But, hang it all! it might be possible for science to dis-

cover some prophylactic, I should think—or some antidote of some kind—

Morten Kiil. To kill these animals, do you mean?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, or to make them innocuous.

Morten Kiil. Couldn't you try some ratsbane?

Dr. Stockmann. Don't talk nonsense! They all say it is only imagination, you know. Well, let it go at that! Let them have their own way about it! Haven't the ignorant, narrow-minded curs reviled me as an enemy of the people?—and haven't they been ready to tear the clothes off my back too?

Morten Kiil. And broken all your windows to pieces!

Dr. Stockmann. And then there is my duty to my family. I must talk it over with Katherine; she is great on those things.

Morten Kiil. That is right; be guided by a reasonable woman's advice.

Dr. Stockmann (advancing towards him). To think you could do such a preposterous thing! Risking Katherine's money in this way, and putting me in such a horribly painful dilemma! When I look at you, I think I see the devil himself—

Morten Kiil. Then I had better go. But I must have an answer from you before two o'clock—yes or no. If it is no, the shares go to a charity, and that this very day.

Dr. Stockmann. And what does Katherine get?

Morten Kiil. Not a halfpenny. (*The door leading to the hall opens and HOVSTAD and ASLAKSEN make their appearance.*) Look at those two!

Dr. Stockmann (staring at them). What the devil!—have *you* actually the face to come into my house?

Hovstad. Certainly.

Aslaksen. We have something to say to you, you see.

Morten Kiil (in a whisper). Yes or no—before two o'clock.

Aslaksen (glancing at HOVSTAD). Aha! (*MORTEN KIIL goes out.*)

Dr. Stockmann. Well, what do you want with me? Be brief.

Hovstad. I can quite understand that you are annoyed with us for our attitude at the meeting yesterday—

Dr. Stockmann. Attitude, do you call it? Yes, it was a charming attitude! I call it weak, womanish—damnably shameful!

Hovstad. Call it what you like, we could not do otherwise.

Dr. Stockmann. You *dared* not do otherwise—isn't that it?

Hovstad. Well, if you like to put it that way.

Aslaksen. But why did you not let us have word of it beforehand?—just a hint to Mr. Hovstad or to me?

Dr. Stockmann. A hint? Of what?

Aslaksen. Of what was behind it all.

Dr. Stockmann. I don't understand you in the least.

Aslaksen (with a confidential nod). Oh yes, you do, Dr. Stockmann.

Hovstad. It is no good making a mystery of it any longer.

Dr. Stockmann (looking first at one of them and then at the other). What the devil do you both mean?

Aslaksen. May I ask if your father-in-law is not going round the town buying up all the shares in the Baths?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, he has been buying Bath shares today; but—

Aslaksen. It would have been more prudent to get some one else to do it—some one less nearly related to you.

Hovstad. And you should not have let your name appear in the affair.

There was no need for anyone to know that the attack on the Baths came from you. You ought to have consulted me, Dr. Stockmann.

Dr. Stockmann (looks in front of him; then a light seems to dawn on him and he says in amazement): Are such things conceivable? Are such things possible?

Aslaksen (with a smile). Evidently they are. But it is better to use a little finesse, you know.

Hovstad. And it is much better to have several persons in a thing of that sort; because the responsibility of each individual is lessened, when there are others with him.

Dr. Stockmann (composedly). Come to the point, gentlemen. What do you want?

Aslaksen. Perhaps Mr. Hovstad had better—

Hovstad. No, you tell him, Aslaksen.

Aslaksen. Well, the fact is that, now we know the bearings of the whole affair, we think we might venture to put the "People's Messenger" at your disposal.

Dr. Stockmann. Do you dare do that now? What about public opinion? Are you not afraid of a storm breaking upon our heads?

Hovstad. We will try to weather it.

Aslaksen. And you must be ready to go off quickly on a new tack, Doctor.

As soon as your invective has done its work—

Dr. Stockmann. Do you mean, as soon as my father-in-law and I have got hold of the shares at a low figure?

Hovstad. Your reasons for wishing to get the control of the Baths are mainly scientific, I take it.

Dr. Stockmann. Of course; it was for scientific reasons that I persuaded

the old “Badger” to stand in with me in the matter. So we will tinker at the conduit pipes a little, and dig up a little bit of the shore, and it shan’t cost the town a sixpence. That will be all right—eh?

Hovstad. I think so—if you have the “People’s Messenger” behind you.

Aslaksen. The Press is a power in a free community, Doctor.

Dr. Stockmann. Quite so. And so is public opinion. And you, Mr. Aslaksen—I suppose you will be answerable for the Householders’ Association?

Aslaksen. Yes, and for the Temperance Society. You may rely on that.

Dr. Stockmann. But, gentlemen—I really am ashamed to ask the question—but, what return do you—?

Hovstad. We should prefer to help you without any return whatever, believe me. But the “People’s Messenger” is in rather a shaky condition; it doesn’t go really well; and I should be very unwilling to suspend the paper now, when there is so much work to do here in the political way.

Dr. Stockmann. Quite so; that would be a great trial to such a friend of the people as you are. (*Flares up.*) But I am an enemy of the people, remember! (*Walks about the room.*) Where have I put my stick? Where the devil is my stick?

Hovstad. What’s that?

Aslaksen. Surely you never mean—?

Dr. Stockmann (standing still). And suppose I don’t give you a single penny of all I get out of it? Money is not very easy to get out of us rich folk, please to remember!

Hovstad. And you please to remember that this affair of the shares can be represented in two ways!

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, and you are just the man to do it. If I don’t come to the rescue of the “People’s Messenger,” you will certainly take an evil view of the affair; you will hunt me down, I can well imagine—pursue me—try to throttle me as a dog does a hare.

Hovstad. It is a natural law; every animal must fight for its own livelihood.

Aslaksen. And get its food where it can, you know.

Dr. Stockmann (walking about the room). Then you go and look for yours in the gutter; because I am going to show you which is the strongest animal of us three! (*Finds an umbrella and brandishes it above his head.*) Ah, now—!

Hovstad. You are surely not going to use violence!

Aslaksen. Take care what you are doing with that umbrella.

Dr. Stockmann. Out of the window with you, Mr. Hovstad!

Hovstad (*edging to the door*). Are you quite mad!

Dr. Stockmann. Out of the window, Mr. Aslaksen! Jump, I tell you! You will have to do it, sooner or later.

Aslaksen (*running round the writing table*). Moderation, Doctor—I am a delicate man—I can stand so little—(*calls out*) help, help!

MRS. STOCKMANN, PETRA and HORSTER come in from the sitting room.

Mrs. Stockmann. Good gracious, Thomas! What is happening?

Dr. Stockmann (*brandishing the umbrella*). Jump out, I tell you! Out into the gutter!

Hovstad. An assault on an unoffending man! I call you to witness, Captain Horster. (*Hurries out through the hall*.)

Aslaksen (*irresolutely*). If only I knew the way about here—. (*Steals out through the sitting room*.)

Mrs. Stockmann (*holding her husband back*). Control yourself, Thomas!

Dr. Stockmann (*throwing down the umbrella*). Upon my soul, they have escaped after all.

Mrs. Stockmann. What did they want you to do?

Dr. Stockmann. I will tell you later on; I have something else to think about now. (*Goes to the table and writes something on a calling card*.) Look there, Katherine; what is written there?

Mrs. Stockmann. Three big No's; what does that mean?

Dr. Stockmann. I will tell you that too, later on. (*Holds out the card to PETRA*.) There, Petra; tell sooty-face to run over to "the Badger's" with that, as quickly as she can. Hurry up! (*PETRA takes the card and goes out to the hall*.)

Dr. Stockmann. Well, I think I have had a visit from every one of the devil's messengers today! But now I am going to sharpen my pen till they can feel its point; I shall dip it in venom and gall; I shall hurl my inkpot at their heads!

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, but we are going away, you know, Thomas.

PETRA comes back.

Dr. Stockmann. Well?

Petra. She has gone with it.

Dr. Stockmann. Good. Going away, did you say? No, I'll be hanged if we are going away! We are going to stay where we are, Katherine!

Petra. Stay here?

Mrs. Stockmann. Here, in the town?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, here. This is the field of battle—this is where the fight will be. This is where I shall triumph! As soon as I have had my trousers sewn up I shall go out and look for another house. We must have a roof over our heads for the winter.

Horster. That you shall have in my house.

Dr. Stockmann. Can I?

Horster. Yes, quite well. I have plenty of room, and I am almost never at home.

Mrs. Stockmann. How good of you, Captain Horster!

Petra. Thank you!

Dr. Stockmann (*grasping his hand*). Thank you, thank you! That is one trouble over! Now I can set to work in earnest at once. There is an endless amount of things to look through here, Katherine! Luckily I shall have all my time at my disposal; because I have been dismissed from the Baths, you know.

Mrs. Stockmann (*with a sigh*). Oh yes, I expected that.

Dr. Stockmann. And they want to take my practice away from me too. Let them! I have got the poor people to fall back upon, anyway—those that don't pay anything; and, after all, they need me most, too. But, by Jove, they will have to listen to me; I shall preach to them in season and out of season, as it says somewhere.

Mrs. Stockmann. But, dear Thomas, I should have thought events had showed you what use it is to preach.

Dr. Stockmann. You are really ridiculous, Katherine. Do you want me to let myself be beaten off the field by public opinion and the compact majority and all that devilry? No, thank you! And what I want to do is so simple and clear and straightforward. I only want to drum into the heads of these curs the fact that the liberals are the most insidious enemies of freedom—that party programs strangle every young and vigorous truth—that considerations of expediency turn morality and justice upside down—and that they will end by making life here unbearable. Don't you think, Captain Horster, that I ought to be able to make people understand that?

Horster. Very likely; I don't know much about such things myself.

Dr. Stockmann. Well, look here—I will explain! It is the party leaders that must be exterminated. A party leader is like a wolf, you see—like a voracious wolf. He requires a certain number of smaller victims to prey upon every year, if he is to live. Just look at Hovstad and Aslak-

sen! How many smaller victims have they not put an end to—or at any rate maimed and mangled until they are fit for nothing except to be householders or subscribers to the “People’s Messenger”! (*Sits down on the edge of the table.*) Come here, Katherine—look how beautifully the sun shines today! And this lovely spring air I am drinking in!

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, if only we could live on sunshine and spring air, Thomas.

Dr. Stockmann. Oh, you will have to pinch and save a bit—then we shall get along. That gives me very little concern. What is much worse is, that I know of no one who is liberal-minded and high-minded enough to venture to take up my work after me.

Petra. Don’t think about that, father; you have plenty of time before you. Hullo, here are the boys already!

EJLIF and MORTEN come in from the sitting room.

Mrs. Stockmann. Have you got a holiday?

Morten. No; but we were fighting with the other boys between lessons—

Ejlf. That isn’t true; it was the other boys were fighting with us.

Morten. Well, and then Mr. Rörlund said we had better stay at home for a day or two.

Dr. Stockmann (*snapping his fingers and getting up from the table*). I have it! I have it, by Jove! You shall never set foot in the school again!

The Boys. No more school!

Mrs. Stockmann. But, Thomas—

Dr. Stockmann. Never, I say. I will educate you myself; that is to say, you shan’t learn a blessed thing—

Morten. Hooray!

Dr. Stockmann.—but I will make liberal-minded and high-minded men of you. You must help me with that, Petra.

Petra. Yes, father, you may be sure I will.

Dr. Stockmann. And my school shall be in the room where they insulted me and called me an enemy of the people. But we are too few as we are; I must have at least twelve boys to begin with.

Mrs. Stockmann. You will certainly never get them in this town.

Dr. Stockmann. We shall. (*To the boys.*) Don’t you know any street urchins—regular ragamuffins—?

Morten. Yes, father, I know lots!

Dr. Stockmann. That’s capital! Bring me some specimens of them. I am

going to experiment with curs, just for once; there may be some exceptional heads among them.

Morten. And what are we going to do, when you have made liberalminded and high-minded men of us?

Dr. Stockmann. Then you shall drive all the wolves out of the country, my boys!

EJLIF looks rather doubtful about it; MORTEN jumps about crying "Hurrah!"

Mrs. Stockmann. Let us hope it won't be the wolves that will drive you out of the country, Thomas.

Dr. Stockmann. Are you out of your mind, Katherine? Drive me out! Now—when I am the strongest man in the town!

Mrs. Stockmann. The strongest—now?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, and I will go so far as to say that now I am the strongest man in the whole world.

Morten. I say!

Dr. Stockmann (lowering his voice). Hush! You mustn't say anything about it yet; but I have made a great discovery.

Mrs. Stockmann. Another one?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes. (*Gathers them round him, and says confidentially*): It is this, let me tell you—that the strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone.

Mrs. Stockmann (smiling and shaking her head). Oh, Thomas, Thomas!

Petra (encouragingly, as she grasps her father's hands). Father!

Anton Chekhov¹

1860–1904

Like Synge, Chekhov wrote plays more of mood than of action. Like Ibsen, he used symbols to convey psychological states. But where Synge was thoroughly Irish and Ibsen typically Norwegian, Chekhov was a spokesman for the Russia of his time. Through his greatest plays runs one recurring theme. That theme is change, and the tragedy of people who cannot adapt to it.

Chekhov's Russia was in a state of social flux. The old aristocracy was doomed, and the traditional class distinctions were soon to be broken down. These alterations in the social structure were inevitable, the dramatist saw, and his tragedies are those of people caught in the tide and unable to ride with it.

There is poignancy in Chekhov's tragic characters. They do not passively accept being submerged. They reach out toward their dreams; they hope for something better. Chekhov's dramatic moods alternate between hope and despair.

The cherry orchard in Chekhov's play is a symbol of an old, outdated way of life. Once productive and world-famous, the grandest possession of a proud family, the orchard has become a useless luxury which must be sold to pay heavy debts.

Madame Ranevskaya brought about the family calamity by her generous, foolish, spendthrift behavior. Yet she cannot face the need to turn the cherry orchard into a summer resort, which would be profitable. Her adopted daughter Varya tries to run the household economically, but her small efforts are useless. Madame Ranevskaya, accustomed to a life of extravagant ease, cannot change; and the estate is auctioned off. It is bought by a former serf who begins im-

¹ For a biography of Anton Chekhov, see Vol. 3, pp. 448–450, in this set.

mediately to have the cherry trees cut down. The family leaves, cheerfully dreaming of an untroubled life ahead, just as they had formerly dreamed that they could return to the happy past. Despite their optimism, however, one has the sense that they are really trapped, as much by their own shortcomings as by their social situation.

The servants, too, are unable to adapt to the new order. Old Firs cannot accept freedom after his long years of service; at the play's end, when he is forgotten and left behind, he lies down almost certainly to die. *The Cherry Orchard* ends with the sound of a snapping violin string which signals the end of a lovely but outmoded way of life.

Russian though it is in atmosphere, nineteenth-century though it is in setting, Chekhov's masterpiece is timeless. Today's world, too, is changing, and thinking people are forced to re-evaluate their ideas and attitudes. Chekhov saw the great danger in grasping thoughtlessly at panaceas. He longed to better the conditions in Russia under the czars, but he distrusted generalized solutions. He saw no practical answer to Russia's problems in Tolstoy's dreams of mankind's perfectibility, nor in Dostoevsky's Christianity, nor in communism. Chekhov wrote: "God preserve us from generalizations. There are a great many opinions in this world, and a good half of them are professed by people who have never been in trouble."

Chekhov makes no generalizations and no judgments. He gives no hint, in *The Cherry Orchard*, that he believes the new way of life will necessarily be better; nor does he condemn the old way as altogether bad.

Like the characters in Synge's play,² Chekhov's people are caught in a tragic dilemma. Like Synge, Chekhov has us believe that they will endure because of their humanity. The strength of Chekhov's people is their unquenchable hope. They cannot change the world to suit their weaknesses. When they cannot alter themselves to fit the world, they must simply endure. Their hope, their perseverance are remarkable. We cannot pity them. We admire them. This was Chekhov's message, as pertinent today as ever, and seldom so powerfully stated.

² See *Riders to the Sea*, Vol. 4, pp. 342-352 in this set.

The Cherry Orchard

CAST OF CHARACTERS

LUBOV ANDREYEVNA RANEVSKAYA, *a landowner.*
ANYA, *her seventeen-year-old daughter.*
VARYA, *her adopted daughter,*
twenty-two years old.
LEONID ANDREYEVICH GAYEV,
MME. RANEVSKAYA'S *brother.*
YERMOLAY ALEXEYEVICH LOPAHIN, *a merchant.*
PYOTR SERGEYEVICH TROFIMOV, *a student.*
SIMEONOV-PISHCHIK, *a landowner.*
CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA, *a governess.*
SEMYON YEPIHODOV, *a clerk.*
DUNYASHA, *a maid.*
FIRS [*pronounced “fierce”*], *a man servant,*
aged eighty-seven.
YASHA, *a young valet.*
A TRAMP.
STATIONMASTER, POST-OFFICE CLERK,
GUESTS, SERVANTS.

The action takes place on Mme. Ranevskaya's estate.

ACT I

A room that is still called the nursery. One of the doors leads into ANYA's room. Dawn, the sun will soon rise. It is May, the cherry trees are in blossom, but it is cold in the orchard; there is a morning frost. The windows are shut. Enter DUNYASHA with a candle, and LOPAHIN with a book in his hand.

Lopahin. The train is in, thank God. What time is it?

Dunyasha. Nearly two. (*Puts out the candle.*) It's light already.

Lopahin. How late is the train, anyway? Two hours at least. (*Yawns and stretches.*) I'm a fine one! What a fool I've made of myself! I came here on purpose to meet them at the station, and then I went and overslept. I fell asleep in my chair. How annoying! You might have waked me . . .

Dunyasha. I thought you'd left. (*Listens.*) I think they're coming!

Lopahin (listens). No, they've got to get the luggage, and one thing and another . . . (*Pause.*) Lubov Andreyevna spent five years abroad, I don't know what she's like now . . . She's a fine person—light-hearted, simple. I remember when I was a boy of fifteen, my poor father—he had a shop here in the village then—punched me in the face with his fist and made my nose bleed. We'd come into the yard, I don't know what for, and he'd had a drop too much. Lubov Andreyevna, I remember her as if it were yesterday—she was still young and so slim-led me to the washbasin, in this very room . . . in the nursery. "Don't cry, little peasant," she said, "it'll heal in time for your wedding. . . ." (*Pause.*) Little peasant . . . my father was a peasant, it's true, and here I am in a white waistcoat and yellow shoes. A pig in a pastry shop, you might say. It's true I'm rich, I've got a lot of money. . . . But when you look at it closely, I'm a peasant through and through. (*Pages the book.*) Here I've been reading this book and I didn't understand a word of it. . . . I was reading it and fell asleep. . . . (*Pause.*)

Dunyasha. And the dogs were awake all night, they feel that their masters are coming.

Lopahin. Dunyasha, why are you so—

Dunyasha. My hands are trembling. I'm going to faint.

Lopahin. You're too soft, Dunyasha. You dress like a lady, and look at the way you do your hair. That's not right. One should remember one's place.

Enter YEPIHODOV with a bouquet; he wears a jacket and highly polished boots that squeak badly. He drops the bouquet as he comes in.

Yepihodov (picking up the bouquet). Here, the gardener sent these, said you're to put them in the dining room. (*Hands the bouquet to DUNYASHA.*)

Lopahin. And bring me some *kvass*.

Dunyasha. Yes, Sir. (*Exits.*)

Yepihodov. There's a frost this morning—three degrees below—and yet the cherries are all in blossom. I cannot approve of our climate. (*Sighs.*) I cannot. Our climate does not activate properly. And, Yermolay Alexeyevich, allow me to make a further remark. The other day I bought myself a pair of boots, and I make bold to assure you, they squeak so that it is really intolerable. What should I grease them with?

Lopahin. Oh, get out! I'm fed up with you.

Yepihodov. Every day I meet with misfortune. And I don't complain, I've got used to it, I even smile.

DUNYASHA enters, hands LOPAHIN the kvass.

Yepihodov. I am leaving. (*Stumbles against a chair, which falls over.*) There! (*Triumphantly, as it were.*) There again, you see what sort of circumstance, pardon the expression. . . . It is absolutely phenomenal! (*Exits.*)

Dunyasha. You know, Yermolay Alexeyevich, I must tell you, Yepihodov has proposed to me.

Lopahin. Ah!

Dunyasha. I simply don't know . . . he's a quiet man, but sometimes when he starts talking, you can't make out what he means. He speaks nicely—and it's touching—but you can't understand it. I sort of like him though, and he is crazy about me. He's an unlucky man . . . every day something happens to him. They tease him about it here . . . they call him Two-and-Twenty Troubles.

Lopahin (listening). There! I think they're coming.

Dunyasha. They are coming! What's the matter with me? I feel cold all over.

Lopahin. They really are coming. Let's go and meet them. Will she recognize me? We haven't seen each other for five years.

Dunyasha (in a flutter). I'm going to faint this minute. . . . Oh, I'm going to faint!

Two carriages are heard driving up to the house. LOPAHIN and DUNYASHA go out quickly. The stage is left empty. There is a noise in the adjoining rooms. FIRS, who had driven to the station to meet LUBOV ANDREYEVNA RANEVSKAYA, crosses the stage hurriedly, leaning on a stick. He is wearing an old-fashioned livery and a tall hat. He mutters to himself indistinctly. The hubbub off stage increases. A VOICE: "Come, let's go this way." Enter LUBOV ANDREYEVNA, ANYA and CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA, with a pet dog on a leash, all in traveling dresses; VARYA, wearing a coat and kerchief; GAYEV, SIMEONOVPISHCHIK, LOPAHIN, DUNYASHA with a bag and an umbrella, servants with luggage. All walk across the room.

Anya. Let's go this way. Do you remember what room this is, Mamma?

Mme. Ranevskaya (joyfully, through her tears). The nursery!

Varya. How cold it is! My hands are numb. (*To MME. RANEVSKAYA.*)

Your rooms are just the same as they were Mamma, the white one and the violet.

Mme. Ranevskaya. The nursery! My darling, lovely room! I slept here when I was a child . . . (Cries.) And here I am, like a child again! (Kisses her brother and VARYA, and then her brother again.) Varya's just the same as ever, like a nun. And I recognized Dunyasha. (Kisses DUNYASHA.)

Gayev. The train was two hours late. What do you think of that? What a way to manage things!

Charlotta (to PISHCHIK). My dog eats nuts, too.

Pishchik (in amazement). You don't say so!

All go out, except ANYA and DUNYASHA.

Dunyasha. We've been waiting for you for hours. (*Takes ANYA'S hat and coat.*)

Anya. I didn't sleep on the train for four nights and now I'm frozen . . .

Dunyasha. It was Lent when you left; there was snow and frost, and now . . . My darling! (Laughs and kisses her.) I have been waiting for you, my sweet, my darling! But I must tell you something . . . I can't put it off another minute . . .

Anya (listlessly). What now?

Dunyasha. The clerk, Yepikhodov, proposed to me, just after Easter.

Anya. There you are, at it again . . . (Straightening her hair.) I've lost all my hairpins . . . (She is staggering with exhaustion.)

Dunyasha. Really, I don't know what to think. He loves me—he loves me so!

Anya (*looking towards the door of her room, tenderly*). My own room, my windows, just as though I'd never been away. I'm home! Tomorrow morning I'll get up and run into the orchard. Oh, if I could only get some sleep. I didn't close my eyes during the whole journey—I was so anxious.

Dunyasha. Pyotr Sergeyevich came the day before yesterday.

Anya (*joyfully*). Petya!

Dunyasha. He's asleep in the bathhouse. He has settled there. He said he was afraid of being in the way. (*Looks at her watch*.) I should wake him, but Miss Varya told me not to. "Don't you wake him," she said.

Enter VARYA with a bunch of keys at her belt.

Varya. Dunyasha, coffee, and be quick . . . Mamma's asking for coffee.

Dunyasha. In a minute. (*Exits*.)

Varya. Well, thank God, you've come. You're home again. (*Fondling ANYA*.) My darling is here again. My pretty one is back.

Anya. Oh, what I've been through!

Varya. I can imagine.

Anya. When we left, it was Holy Week, it was cold then, and all the way Charlotta chattered and did her tricks. Why did you have to saddle me with Charlotta?

Varya. You couldn't have traveled all alone, darling—at seventeen!

Anya. We got to Paris, it was cold there, snowing. My French is dreadful. Mamma lived on the fifth floor; I went up there, and found all kinds of Frenchmen, ladies, an old priest with a book. The place was full of tobacco smoke, and so bleak. Suddenly I felt sorry for Mamma, so sorry, I took her head in my arms and hugged her and couldn't let go of her. Afterwards Mamma kept fondling me and crying . . .

Varya (*through tears*). Don't speak of it . . . don't.

Anya. She had already sold her villa at Mentone, she had nothing left, nothing. I hadn't a kopeck left either, we had only just enough to get home. And Mamma wouldn't understand! When we had dinner at the stations, she always ordered the most expensive dishes, and tipped the waiters a whole ruble. Charlotta, too. And Yasha kept ordering, too—it was simply awful. You know Yasha's Mamma's footman now, we brought him here with us.

Varya. Yes, I've seen the blackguard.

Anya. Well, tell me—have you paid the interest?

Varya. How could we?

Anya. Good heavens, good heavens!

Varya. In August the estate will be put up for sale.

Anya. My God!

LOPAHIN *peeps in at the door and bleats.*

Lopahin. Meh-h-h. (*Disappears.*)

Varya (*through tears*). What I couldn't do to him! (*Shakes her fist threateningly.*)

Anya (*embracing VARYA, gently*). Varya, has he proposed to you? (*VARYA shakes her head.*) But he loves you. Why don't you come to an understanding? What are you waiting for?

Varya. Oh, I don't think anything will ever come of it. He's too busy, he has no time for me . . . pays no attention to me. I've washed my hands of him—I can't bear the sight of him. They all talk about our getting married, they all congratulate me—and all the time there's really nothing to it—it's all like a dream. (*In another tone.*) You have a new brooch—like a bee.

Anya (*sadly*). Mamma bought it. (*She goes into her own room and speaks gaily like a child.*) And you know, in Paris I went up in a balloon.

Varya. My darling's home, my pretty one is back! (*DUNYASHA returns with the coffeepot and prepares coffee.* VARYA stands at the door of ANYA'S room.) All day long, darling, as I go about the house, I keep dreaming. If only we could marry you off to a rich man, I should feel at ease. Then I would go into a convent, and afterwards to Kiev, to Moscow . . . I would spend my life going from one holy place to another . . . I'd go on and on . . . What a blessing that would be!

Anya. The birds are singing in the orchard. What time is it?

Varya. It must be after two. Time you were asleep, darling. (*Goes into ANYA'S room.*) What a blessing that would be!

YASHA enters with a plaid and a traveling bag, crosses the stage.

Yasha (*finically*). May I pass this way, please?

Dunyasha. A person could hardly recognize you, Yasha. Your stay abroad has certainly done wonders for you.

Yasha. Hm-m . . . and who are you?

Dunyasha. When you went away I was that high—(*Indicating with her hand.*) I'm Dunyasha—Fyodor Kozoyedev's daughter. Don't you remember?

Yasha. Hm! What a peach! (*He looks round and embraces her. She cries out and drops a saucer.* YASHA leaves quickly.)

Varya (*in the doorway, in a tone of annoyance*). What's going on here?

Dunyasha (*through tears*). I've broken a saucer.

Varya. Well, that's good luck.

Anya (*coming out of her room*). We ought to warn Mamma that Petya's here.

Varya. I left orders not to wake him.

Anya (*musingly*). Six years ago father died. A month later brother Grisha was drowned in the river. . . . Such a pretty little boy he was—only seven. It was more than Mamma could bear, so she went away, went away without looking back . . . (*Shudders*.) How well I understand her, if she only knew! (*Pauses*.) And Petya Trofimov was Grisha's tutor, he may remind her of it all . . .

Enter FIRS, wearing a jacket and a white waistcoat. He goes up to the coffeepot.

Firs (*anxiously*). The mistress will have her coffee here. (*Puts on white gloves*.) Is the coffee ready? (*Sternly, to DUNYASHA*.) Here, you! And where's the cream?

Dunyasha. Oh, my God! (*Exits quickly*.)

Firs (*fussing over the coffeepot*). Hah! the addlehead! (*Mutters to himself*.) Home from Paris. And the old master used to go to Paris too . . . by carriage. (*Laughs*.)

Varya. What is it, Firs?

Firs. What is your pleasure, Miss? (*Joyfully*.) My mistress has come home, and I've seen her at last! Now I can die. (*Weeps with joy*.)

Enter MME. RANEVSKAYA, GAYEV, and SIMEONOV-PISHCHIK. The latter is wearing a tight-waisted, pleated coat of fine cloth, and full trousers. GAYEV, as he comes in, goes through the motions of a billiard player with his arms and body.

Mme. Ranevskaya. Let's see, how does it go? Yellow ball in the corner!
Bank shot in the side pocket!

Gayev. I'll tip it in the corner! There was a time, sister, when you and I used to sleep in this very room, and now I'm fifty-one, strange as it may seem.

Lopahin. Yes, time flies.

Gayev. Who?

Lopahin. I say, time flies.

Gayev. It smells of patchouli here.

Anya. I'm going to bed. Good night, Mamma. (*Kisses her mother*.)

Mme. Ranevskaya. My darling child! (*Kisses her hands*.) Are you happy to be home? I can't come to my senses.

Anya. Good night, Uncle.

Gayev (*kissing her face and hands*). God bless you, how like your mother you are! (*To his sister*) At her age, Luba, you were just like her.

ANYA *shakes hands with LOPAHIN and PISHCHIK, then goes out, shutting the door behind her.*

Mme. Ranevskaya. She's very tired.

Pishchik. Well, it was a long journey.

Varya (*to LOPAHIN and PISHCHIK*). How about it, gentlemen? It's past two o'clock—isn't it time for you to go?

Mme. Ranevskaya (*laughs*). You're just the same as ever, Varya. (*Draws her close and kisses her*.) I'll have my coffee and then we'll all go. (*FIRS puts a small cushion under her feet*.) Thank you, my dear. I've got used to coffee. I drink it day and night. Thanks, my dear old man. (*Kisses him*.)

Varya. I'd better see if all the luggage has been brought in. (*Exits*.)

Mme. Ranevskaya. Can it really be I sitting here? (*Laughs*.) I feel like dancing, waving my arms about. (*Covers her face with her hands*.) But maybe I am dreaming! God knows I love my country, I love it tenderly; I couldn't look out of the window in the train, I kept crying so. (*Through tears*.) But I must have my coffee. Thank you, Firs, thank you, dear old man. I'm so happy that you're still alive.

Firs. Day before yesterday.

Gayev. He's hard of hearing.

Lopahin. I must go soon, I'm leaving for Kharkov about five o'clock. How annoying! I'd like to have a good look at you, talk to you . . . You're just as splendid as ever.

Pishchik (*breathing heavily*). She's even better looking. . . . Dressed in the latest Paris fashion. . . . Perish my carriage and all its four wheels. . . .

Lopahin. Your brother, Leonid Andreyevich, says I'm a vulgarian and an exploiter. But it's all the same to me—let him talk. I only want you to trust me as you used to. I want you to look at me with your touching, wonderful eyes, as you used to. Dear God! My father was a serf of your father's and grandfather's, but you, you yourself, did so much for me once . . . so much . . . that I've forgotten all about that; I love you as though you were my sister—even more.

Mme. Ranevskaya. I can't sit still, I simply can't. (*Jumps up and walks about in violent agitation*.) This joy is too much for me. . . . Laugh at me, I'm silly! My own darling bookcase! My darling table! (*Kisses it*.)

Gayev. While you were away, nurse died.

Mme. Ranevskaya (*sits down and takes her coffee*). Yes, God rest her soul; they wrote me about it.

Gayev. And Anastasy is dead. Petrushka Kossoy has left me and has gone into town to work for the police inspector. (*Takes a box of sweets out of his pocket and begins to suck one*.)

Pishchik. My daughter Dashenka sends her regards.

Lopahin. I'd like to tell you something very pleasant—cheering. (*Glancing at his watch*.) I am leaving directly. There isn't much time to talk. But I will put it in a few words. As you know, your cherry orchard is to be sold to pay your debts. The sale is to be on the twenty-second of August; but don't you worry, my dear, you may sleep in peace; there is a way out. Here is my plan. Give me your attention! Your estate is only fifteen miles from the town; the railway runs close by it; and if the cherry orchard and the land along the river bank were cut up into lots and these leased for summer cottages, you would have an income of at least 25,000 rubles a year out of it.

Gayev. Excuse me. . . . What nonsense.

Mme. Ranevskaya. I don't quite understand you, Yermolay Alexeyevich.

Lopahin. You will get an annual rent of at least ten rubles per acre, and if you advertise at once, I'll give you any guarantee you like that you won't have a square foot of ground left by autumn, all the lots will be snapped up. In short, congratulations, you're saved. The location is splendid—by that deep river. . . . Only, of course, the ground must be cleared . . . all the old buildings, for instance, must be torn down, and this house, too, which is useless, and, of course, the old cherry orchard must be cut down.

Mme. Ranevskaya. Cut down? My dear, forgive me, but you don't know what you're talking about. If there's one thing that's interesting—indeed, remarkable—in the whole province, it's precisely our cherry orchard.

Lopahin. The only remarkable thing about this orchard is that it's a very large one. There's a crop of cherries every other year, and you can't do anything with them; no one buys them.

Gayev. This orchard is even mentioned in the Encyclopedia.

Lopahin (*glancing at his watch*). If we can't think of a way out, if we don't come to a decision, on the twenty-second of August the cherry orchard and the whole estate will be sold at auction. Make up your minds! There's no other way out—I swear. None, none.

Firs. In the old days, forty or fifty years ago, the cherries were dried, soaked, pickled, and made into jam, and we used to—

Gayev. Keep still, Firs.

Firs. And the dried cherries would be shipped by the cartload. It meant a lot of money! And in those days the dried cherries were soft and juicy, sweet, fragrant. . . . They knew the way to do it, then.

Mme. Ranevskaya. And why don't they do it that way now?

Firs. They've forgotten. Nobody remembers it.

Pishchik (*to MME. RANEVSKAYA*). What's doing in Paris? Eh? Did you eat frogs there?

Mme. Ranevskaya. I ate crocodiles.

Pishchik. Just imagine!

Lopahin. There used to be only landowners and peasants in the country, but now these summer people have appeared on the scene. . . . All the towns, even the small ones, are surrounded by these summer cottages; and in another twenty years, no doubt, the summer population will have grown enormously. Now the summer resident only drinks tea on his porch, but maybe he'll take to working his acre, too, and then your cherry orchard will be a rich, happy, luxuriant place.

Gayev (*indignantly*). Poppycock!

Enter VARYA and YASHA.

Varya. There are two telegrams for you, Mamma dear. (*Picks a key from the bunch at her belt and noisily opens an old-fashioned bookcase.*) Here they are.

Mme. Ranevskaya. They're from Paris. (*Tears them up without reading them.*) I'm through with Paris.

Gayev. Do you know, Luba, how old this bookcase is? Last week I pulled out the bottom drawer and there I found the date burned in it. It was made exactly a hundred years ago. Think of that! We could celebrate its centenary. True, it's an inanimate object, but nevertheless, a bookcase . . .

Pishchik (*amazed*). A hundred years! Just imagine!

Gayev. Yes. (*Tapping it.*) That's something. . . . Dear, honored bookcase, hail to you who for more than a century have served the glorious ideals of goodness and justice! Your silent summons to fruitful toil has never weakened in all those hundred years (*through tears*), sustaining, through successive generations of our family, courage and faith in a better future, and fostering in us ideals of goodness and social consciousness. . . . (*Pauses.*)

Lopahin. Yes . . .

Mme. Ranevskaya. You haven't changed a bit, Leonid.

Gayev (somewhat embarrassed). I'll play it off the red in the corner! Tip it in the side pocket!

Lopahin (looking at his watch). Well, it's time for me to go . . .

Yasha (handing a pillbox to MME. RANEVSKAYA). Perhaps you'll take your pills now.

Pishchik. One shouldn't take medicines, dearest lady, they do neither harm nor good. . . . Give them here, my valued friend. (*Takes the pillbox, pours the pills into his palm, blows on them, puts them in his mouth, and washes them down with some kvass.*) There!

Mme. Ranevskaya (frightened). You must be mad!

Pishchik. I've taken all the pills.

Lopahin. What a glutton!

All laugh.

Firs. The gentleman visited us in Easter week, ate half a bucket of pickles, he did . . . (*Mumbles.*)

Mme. Ranevskaya. What's he saying?

Varya. He's been mumbling like that for the last three years—we're used to it.

Yasha. His declining years!

CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA, *very thin, tightly laced, dressed in white, a lorgnette at her waist, crosses the stage.*

Lopahin. Forgive me, Charlotta Ivanovna, I've not had time to greet you. (*Tries to kiss her hand.*)

Charlotta (pulling away her hand). If I let you kiss my hand, you'll be wanting to kiss my elbow next, and then my shoulder.

Lopahin. I've no luck today. (*All laugh.*) Charlotta Ivanovna, show us a trick.

Mme. Ranevskaya. Yes, Charlotta, do a trick for us.

Charlotta. I don't see the need. I want to sleep. (*Exits.*)

Lopahin. In three weeks we'll meet again. (*Kisses MME. RANEVSKAYA's hand.*) Good-by till then. Time's up. (*To GAYEV*) Bye-bye. (*Kisses PISHCHIK.*) Bye-bye. (*Shakes hands with VARYA, then with FIRS and YASHA.*) I hate to leave. (*To MME. RANEVSKAYA*) If you make up your mind about the cottages, let me know; I'll get you a loan of 50,000 rubles. Think it over seriously.

Varya (crossly). Will you never go!

Lopahin. I'm going, I'm going. (*Exits.*)

Gayev. The vulgarian. But, excuse me . . . Varya's going to marry him, he's Varya's fiancé.

Varya. You talk too much, Uncle dear.

Mme. Ranevskaya. Well, Varya, it would make me happy. He's a good man.

Pishchik. Yes, one must admit, he's a most estimable man. And my Dashenka . . . she too says that . . . she says . . . lots of things (*Snores; but wakes up at once.*) All the same, my valued friend, could you oblige me . . . with a loan of 240 rubles? I must pay the interest on the mortgage tomorrow.

Varya (alarmed). We can't, we can't!

Mme. Ranevskaya. I really haven't any money.

Pishchik. It'll turn up. (*Laughs.*) I never lose hope, I thought everything was lost, that I was done for, when lo and behold, the railway ran through my land . . . and I was paid for it. . . . And something else will turn up again, if not today, then tomorrow . . . Dashenka will win two hundred thousand . . . she's got a lottery ticket.

Mme. Ranevskaya. I've had my coffee, now let's go to bed.

Firs (brushes off GAYEV; admonishingly). You've got the wrong trousers on again. What am I to do with you?

Varya (softly). Anya's asleep. (*Gently opens the window.*) The sun's up now, it's not a bit cold. Look, Mamma dear, what wonderful trees. And heavens, what air! The starlings are singing!

Gayev (opens the other window). The orchard is all white. You've not forgotten it? Luba? That's the long alley that runs straight, straight as an arrow; how it shines on moonlight nights, do you remember? You've not forgotten?

Mme. Ranevskaya (looking out of the window into the orchard). Oh, my childhood, my innocent childhood. I used to sleep in this nursery—I used to look out into the orchard, happiness waked with me every morning, the orchard was just the same then . . . nothing has changed. (*Laughs with joy.*) All, all white! Oh, my orchard! After the dark, rainy autumn and the cold winter, you are young again, and full of happiness, the heavenly angels have not left you . . . If I could free my chest and my shoulders from this rock that weighs on me, if I could only forget the past!

Gayev. Yes, and the orchard will be sold to pay our debts, strange as it may seem. . . .

Mme. Ranevskaya. Look! There is our poor mother walking in the orchard . . . all in white . . . (*Laughs with joy.*) It is she!

Gayev. Where?

Varya. What are you saying, Mamma dear!

Mme. Ranevskaya. There's no one there, I just imagined it. To the right, where the path turns towards the arbor, there's a little white tree, leaning over, that looks like a woman. . . .

Trofimov enters, wearing a shabby student's uniform and spectacles.

Mme. Ranevskaya. What an amazing orchard! White masses of blossom, the blue sky . . .

Trofimov. Lubov Andreyevna! (*She looks round at him.*) I just want to pay my respects to you, then I'll leave at once. (*Kisses her hand ardently.*) I was told to wait until morning, but I hadn't the patience . . .

(MME. RANEVSKAYA *looks at him, perplexed.*)

Varya (through tears). This is Petya Trofimov.

Trofimov. Petya Trofimov, formerly your Grisha's tutor. . . . Can I have changed so much? (MME. RANEVSKAYA *embraces him and weeps quietly.*)

Gayev (embarrassed). Don't, don't, Luba.

Varya (crying). I told you, Petya, to wait until tomorrow.

Mme. Ranevskaya. My Grisha . . . my little boy . . . Grisha . . . my son.

Varya. What can one do, Mamma dear, it's God's will.

Trofimov (softly, through tears). There . . . there.

Mme. Ranevskaya (weeping quietly). My little boy was lost . . . drowned. Why? Why, my friend? (*More quietly.*) Anya's asleep in there, and here I am talking so loudly . . . making all this noise. . . . But tell me, Petya, why do you look so badly? Why have you aged so?

Trofimov. A mangy master, a peasant woman in the train called me.

Mme. Ranevskaya. You were just a boy then, a dear little student, and now your hair's thin—and you're wearing glasses! Is it possible you're still a student? (*Goes toward the door.*)

Trofimov. I suppose I'm a perpetual student.

Mme. Ranevskaya (kisses her brother, then VARYA). Now, go to bed . . . You have aged, too, Leonid.

Pishchik (follows her). So now we turn in. Oh, my gout! I'm staying the night here . . . Lubov Andreyevna, my angel, tomorrow morning. . . . I do need 240 rubles.

Gayev. He keeps at it.

Pishchik. I'll pay it back, dear . . . it's a trifling sum.

Mme. Ranevskaya. All right, Leonid will give it to you. Give it to him, Leonid.

Gayev. Me give it to him! That's a good one!

Mme. Ranevskaya. It can't be helped. Give it to him! He needs it. He'll pay it back.

MME. RANEVSKAYA, TROFIMOV, PISHCHIK, and FIRS go out; GAYEV, VARYA, and YASHA remain.

Gayev. Sister hasn't got out of the habit of throwing money around. (*To Yasha.*) Go away, my good fellow, you smell of the barnyard.

Yasha (with a grin). And you, Leonid Andreyevich, are just the same as ever.

Gayev. Who? (*To Varya*) What did he say?

Varya (to Yasha). Your mother's come from the village; she's been sitting in the servants' room since yesterday, waiting to see you.

Yasha. Botheration!

Varya. You should be ashamed of yourself!

Yasha. She's all I needed! She could have come tomorrow. (*Exits.*)

Varya. Mamma is just the same as ever; she hasn't changed a bit. If she had her own way, she'd keep nothing for herself.

Gayev. Yes . . . (Pauses.) If a great many remedies are offered for some disease, it means it is incurable; I keep thinking and racking my brains; I have many remedies, ever so many, and that really means none. It would be fine if we came in for a legacy; it would be fine if we married off our Anya to a very rich man; or we might go to Yaroslavl and try our luck with our aunt, the Countess. She's very, very rich, you know. . . .

Varya (weeping). If only God would help us!

Gayev. Stop bawling. Aunt's very rich, but she doesn't like us. In the first place, Sister married a lawyer who was no nobleman . . . (*ANYA appears in the doorway.*) She married beneath her, and it can't be said that her behavior has been very exemplary. She's good, kind, sweet, and I love her, but no matter what extenuating circumstances you may adduce, there's no denying that she has no morals. You sense it in her least gesture.

Varya (in a whisper). Anya's in the doorway.

Gayev. Who? (Pauses.) It's queer, something got into my right eye—my eyes are going back on me. . . . And on Thursday, when I was in the circuit court—

Enter ANYA.

Varya. Why aren't you asleep, Anya?

Anya. I can't get to sleep, I just can't.

Gayev. My little pet! (*Kisses ANYA'S face and hands.*) My child! (*Weeps.*) You are not my niece, you're my angel! You're everything to me. Believe me, believe—

Anya. I believe you, Uncle. Everyone loves you and respects you . . . but, Uncle dear, you must keep still. . . . You must. What were you saying just now about my mother? Your own sister? What made you say that?

Gayev. Yes, yes . . . (*Covers his face with her hand.*) Really, that was awful! Good God! Heaven help me! Just now I made a speech to the bookcase . . . so stupid! And only after I was through, I saw how stupid it was.

Varya. It's true, Uncle dear, you ought to keep still. Just don't talk, that's all.

Anya. If you could only keep still, it would make things easier for you too.

Gayev. I'll keep still. (*Kisses ANYA'S and VARYA'S hands.*) I will. But now about business. On Thursday I was in court; well, there were a number of us there, and we began talking of one thing and another, and this and that, and do you know, I believe it will be possible to raise a loan on a promissory note, to pay the interest at the bank.

Varya. If only God would help us!

Gayev. On Tuesday I'll go and see about it again. (*To VARYA.*) Stop bawling. (*To ANYA.*) Your mamma will talk to Lopahin, and he, of course, will not refuse her . . . and as soon as you're rested, you'll go to Yaroslavl to the Countess, your great-aunt. So we'll be working in three directions at once, and the thing is in the bag. We'll pay the interest—I'm sure of it. (*Puts a candy in his mouth.*) I swear on my honor, I swear by anything you like, the estate shan't be sold. (*Excitedly.*) I swear by my own happiness! Here's my hand on it, you can call me a swindler and a scoundrel if I let it come to an auction! I swear by my whole being.

Anya (relieved and quite happy again). How good you are, Uncle, and how clever! (*Embraces him.*) Now I'm at peace, quite at peace, I'm happy.

Enter FIRS.

Firs (reproachfully). Leonid Andreyevich, have you no fear of God? When are you going to bed?

Gayev. Directly, directly. Go away, Firs, I'll . . . yes, I will undress myself. Now, children, 'nightie-'nightie. We'll consider details tomorrow, but now go to sleep. (*Kisses ANYA and VARYA.*) I am a man of the

eighties; they have nothing good to say of that period nowadays. Nevertheless, in the course of my life I have suffered not a little for my convictions. It's not for nothing that the peasant loves me; one should know the peasant; one should know from which—

Anya. There you go again, Uncle.

Varya. Uncle dear, be quiet.

Firs (angrily). Leonid Andreyevich!

Gayev. I'm coming, I'm coming! Go to bed! Double bank shot in the side pocket! Here goes a clean shot . . .

Exits, FIRS hobbling after him.

Anya. I am at peace now. I don't want to go to Yaroslavl—I don't like my great-aunt, but still, I am at peace, thanks to Uncle. (*Sits down.*)

Varya. We must get some sleep. I'm going now. While you were away something unpleasant happened. In the old servants' quarters there are only the old people, as you know; Yefim, Polya, Yevstigney, and Karp, too. They began letting all sorts of rascals in to spend the night. . . . I didn't say anything. Then I heard they'd been spreading a report that I gave them nothing but dried peas to eat—out of stinginess, you know . . . and it was all Yevstigney's doing. . . . All right, I thought, if that's how it is, I thought, just wait. I sent for Yevstigney. . . . (*Yawns.*) He comes. . . . "How's this, Yevstigney?" I say, "You fool . . ." (*Looking at ANYA.*) Anichka! (*Pauses.*) She's asleep. (*Puts her arm around ANYA.*) Come to your little bed. . . . Come . . . (*Leads her.*) My darling has fallen asleep. . . . Come.

They go out. Far away beyond the orchard a shepherd is piping. TROFIMOV crosses the stage and, seeing VARYA and ANYA, stands still.

Varya. Sh! She's asleep . . . asleep . . . Come, darling.

Anya (softly, half-asleep). I'm so tired. Those bells . . . uncle . . . dear. . . . Mamma and Uncle . . .

Varya. Come, my precious, come along. (*They go into ANYA'S room.*)

Trofimov (with emotion). My sunshine, my spring!

ACT II

A meadow. An old, long-abandoned, lopsided little chapel; near it, a well, large slabs, which had apparently once served as tombstones, and an old bench. In the background, the road to the Gayev estate. To one side poplars loom darkly, where the cherry orchard begins.

In the distance a row of telegraph poles, and far off, on the horizon, the faint outline of a large city which is seen only in fine, clear weather. The sun will soon be setting. CHARLOTTA, YASHA, and DUNYASHA are seated on the bench. YEPIHODOV stands near and plays a guitar. All are pensive. CHARLOTTA wears an old peaked cap. She has taken a gun from her shoulder and is straightening the buckle on the strap.

Charlotta (*musingly*). I haven't a real passport, I don't know how old I am, and I always feel that I am very young. When I was a little girl, my father and mother used to go from fair to fair and give performances, very good ones. And I used to do the *salto mortale*, and all sorts of other tricks. And when Papa and Mamma died, a German lady adopted me and began to educate me. Very good. I grew up and became a governess. But where I come from and who I am, I don't know. . . . Who were my parents? Perhaps they weren't even married. . . . I don't know. . . . (*Takes a cucumber out of her pocket and eats it.*) I don't know a thing. (*Pause.*) One wants so much to talk, and there isn't anyone to talk to. . . . I haven't anybody.

Yepihodov (*plays the guitar and sings*). "What care I for the jarring world? What's friend or foe to me? . . ." How agreeable it is to play the mandolin.

Dunyasha. That's a guitar, not a mandolin. (*Looks in a hand mirror and powders her face.*)

Yepihodov. To a madman in love it's a mandolin. (*Sings*) "Would that the heart were warmed by the fire of mutual love!" (*YASHA joins in.*)

Charlotta. How abominably these people sing. Pfui! Like jackals!

Dunyasha (*to YASHA*). How wonderful it must be though to have stayed abroad!

Yasha. Ah, yes, of course, I cannot but agree with you there. (*Yawns and lights a cigar.*)

Yepihodov. Naturally. Abroad, everything has long since achieved full perplexion.

Yasha. That goes without saying.

Yepihodov. I'm a cultivated man, I read all kinds of remarkable books. And yet I can never make out what direction I should take, what it is that I want, properly speaking. Should I live, or should I shoot myself, properly speaking? Nevertheless, I always carry a revolver about me. . . . Here it is . . . (*Shows revolver.*)

Charlotta. I've finished. I'm going. (*Puts the gun over her shoulder.*) You

are a very clever man, Yepihodov, and a very terrible one; women must be crazy about you. Br-r-r! (*Starts to go.*) These clever men are all so stupid; there's no one for me to talk to . . . always alone, alone, I haven't a soul . . . and who I am, and why I am, nobody knows. (*Exits unhurriedly.*)

Yepihodov. Properly speaking and letting other subjects alone, I must say regarding myself, among other things, that fate treats me mercilessly, like a storm treats a small boat. If I am mistaken, let us say, why then do I wake up this morning, and there on my chest is a spider of enormous dimensions . . . like this . . . (*indicates with both hands.*) Again, I take up a pitcher of kvass to have a drink, and in it there is something unseemly to the highest degree, something like a cockroach. (*Pause.*) Have you read Buckle? (*Pause.*) I wish to have a word with you, Avdotya Fyodorovna, if I may trouble you.

Dunyasha. Well, go ahead.

Yepihodov. I wish to speak with you alone. (*Sighs.*)

Dunyasha (*embarrassed*). Very well. Only first bring me my little cape. You'll find it near the wardrobe. It's rather damp here.

Yepihodov. Certainly, ma'am; I will fetch it, ma'am. Now I know what to do with my revolver. (*Takes the guitar and goes off playing it.*)

Yasha. Two-and-Twenty Troubles! An awful fool, between you and me. (*Yawns.*)

Dunyasha. I hope to God he doesn't shoot himself! (*Pause.*) I've become so nervous, I'm always fretting. I was still a little girl when I was taken into the big house, I am quite unused to the simple life now, and my hands are white, as white as a lady's. I've become so soft, so delicate, so refined, I'm afraid of everything. It's so terrifying; and if you deceive me, Yasha, I don't know what will happen to my nerves. (*YASHA kisses her.*)

Yasha. You're a peach! Of course, a girl should never forget herself; and what I dislike more than anything is when a girl don't behave properly.

Dunyasha. I've fallen passionately in love with you; you're educated—you have something to say about everything. (*Pause.*)

Yasha (*yawns*). Yes, Ma'am. Now the way I look at it, if a girl loves someone, it means she is immoral. (*Pause.*) It's agreeable smoking a cigar in the fresh air. (*Listens.*) Someone's coming this way . . . It's our madam and the others. (*DUNYASHA embraces him impulsively.*) You go home, as though you'd been to the river to bathe; go by the little

path, or else they'll run into you and suspect me of having arranged to meet you here. I can't stand that sort of thing.

Dunyasha (coughing softly). Your cigar's made my head ache. (*Exits.*)
YASHA remains standing near the chapel. Enter MME. RANEVSKAYA,
GAYEV, and LOPAHIN.)

Lopahin. You must make up your mind once and for all—there's no time to lose. It's quite a simple question, you know. Do you agree to lease your land for summer cottages or not? Answer in one word, yes or no; only one word!

Mme. Ranevskaya. Who's been smoking such abominable cigars here?
(*Sits down.*)

Gayev. Now that the railway line is so near, it's made things very convenient. (*Sits down.*) Here we've been able to have lunch in town. Yellow ball in the side pocket! I feel like going into the house and playing just one game.

Mme. Ranevskaya. You can do that later.

Lopahin. Only one word! (*Imploringly.*) Do give me an answer!

Gayev (yawning). Who?

Mme. Ranevskaya (looks into her purse). Yesterday I had a lot of money and now my purse is almost empty. My poor Varya tries to economize by feeding us just milk soup; in the kitchen the old people get nothing but dried peas to eat, while I squander money thoughtlessly. (*Drops the purse, scattering gold pieces.*) You see there they go . . . (*Shows vexation.*)

Yasha. Allow me—I'll pick them up. (*Picks up the money.*)

Mme. Ranevskaya. Be so kind, Yasha. And why did I go to lunch in town? That nasty restaurant, with its music and the tablecloth smelling of soap . . . Why drink so much, Leonid? Why eat so much? Why talk so much? Today again you talked a lot, and all so inappropriately about the seventies, about the decadents. And to whom? Talking to waiters about decadents!

Lopahin. Yes.

Gayev (waving his hand). I'm incorrigible; that's obvious. (*Irritably, to YASHA.*) Why do you keep dancing about in front of me?

Yasha (laughs). I can't hear your voice without laughing—

Gayev. Either he or I—

Mme. Ranevskaya. Go away, Yasha; run along.

Yasha (handing MME. RANEVSKAYA her purse). I'm going, at once. (*Hardly able to suppress his laughter.*) This minute. (*Exits.*)

Lopahin. That rich man, Deriganov, wants to buy your estate. They say he's coming to the auction himself.

Mme. Ranevskaya. Where did you hear that?

Lopahin. That's what they are saying in town.

Gayev. Our aunt in Yaroslavl has promised to help; but when she will send the money, and how much, no one knows.

Lopahin. How much will she send? A hundred thousand? Two hundred?

Mme. Ranevskaya. Oh, well, ten or fifteen thousand; and we'll have to be grateful for that.

Lopahin. Forgive me, but such frivolous people as you are, so queer and unbusinesslike—I never met in my life. One tells you in plain language that your estate is up for sale, and you don't seem to take it in.

Mme. Ranevskaya. What are we to do? Tell us what to do.

Lopahin. I do tell you, every day; every day I say the same thing! You must lease the cherry orchard and the land for summer cottages, you must do it and as soon as possible—right away. The auction is close at hand. Please understand! Once you've decided to have the cottages, you can raise as much money as you like, and you're saved.

Mme. Ranevskaya. Cottages—summer people—forgive me, but it's all so vulgar.

Gayev. I agree with you absolutely.

Lopahin. I shall either burst into tears or scream or faint! I can't stand it! You've worn me out! (*To GAYEV.*) You're an old woman!

Gayev. Who?

Lopahin. An old woman! (*Gets up to go.*)

Mme. Ranevskaya (*alarmed*). No, don't go! Please stay, I beg you, my dear. Perhaps we shall think of something.

Lopahin. What is there to think of?

Mme. Ranevskaya. Don't go, I beg you. With you here it's more cheerful anyway. (*Pause.*) I keep expecting something to happen, it's as though the house were going to crash about our ears.

Gayev (*in deep thought*). Bank shot in the corner. . . . Three cushions in the side pocket. . . .

Mme. Ranevskaya. We have been great sinners . . .

Lopahin. What sins could you have committed?

Gayev (*putting a candy in his mouth*). They say I've eaten up my fortune in candy! (*Laughs.*)

Mme. Ranevskaya. Oh, my sins! I've squandered money away recklessly, like a lunatic, and I married a man who made nothing but debts. My husband drank himself to death on champagne, he was a terrific

drinker. And then, to my sorrow, I fell in love with another man, and I lived with him. And just then—that was my first punishment—a blow on the head: my little boy was drowned here in the river. And I went abroad, went away forever . . . never to come back, never to see this river again . . . I closed my eyes and ran, out of my mind. . . . But he followed me, pitiless, brutal. I bought a villa near Mentone, because he fell ill there; and for three years, day and night, I knew no peace, no rest. The sick man wore me out, he sucked my soul dry. Then last year, when the villa was sold to pay my debts, I went to Paris, and there he robbed me, abandoned me, took up with another woman, I tried to poison myself—it was stupid, so shameful—and then suddenly I felt drawn back to Russia, back to my own country, to my little girl. (*Wipes her tears away.*) Lord, Lord! Be merciful, forgive me my sins—don't punish me any more! (*Takes a telegram out of her pocket.*) This came today from Paris—he begs me to forgive him, implores me to go back . . . (*Tears up the telegram.*) Do I hear music? (*Listens.*)

Gayev. That's our famous Jewish band, you remember? Four violins, a flute, and a double bass.

Mme. Ranevskaya. Does it still exist? We ought to send for them some evening and have a party.

Lopahin (*listens*). I don't hear anything. (*Hums softly*) "The Germans for a fee will Frenchify a Russian." (*Laughs.*) I saw a play at the theater yesterday—awfully funny.

Mme. Ranevskaya. There was probably nothing funny about it. You shouldn't go to see plays, you should look at yourselves more often. How drab your lives are—how full of unnecessary talk.

Lopahin. That's true; come to think of it, we do live like fools. (*Pause.*) My pop was a peasant, an idiot; he understood nothing, never taught me anything, all he did was beat me when he was drunk, and always with a stick. Fundamentally, I'm just the same kind of blockhead and idiot. I was never taught anything—I have a terrible handwriting, I write so that I feel ashamed before people, like a pig.

Mme. Ranevskaya. You should get married, my friend.

Lopahin. Yes . . . that's true.

Mme. Ranevskaya. To our Varya, she's a good girl.

Lopahin. Yes.

Mme. Ranevskaya. She's a girl who comes of simple people, she works all day long; and above all, she loves you. Besides, you've liked her for a long time now.

Lopahin. Well, I've nothing against it. She's a good girl. (*Pause.*)
Gayev. I've been offered a place in the bank—6,000 a year. Have you heard?

Mme. Ranevskaya. You're not up to it. Stay where you are.

FIRS enters, carrying an overcoat.

Firs (to GAYEV). Please put this on, Sir, it's damp.

Gayev (putting it on). I'm fed up with you, Brother.

Firs. Never mind. This morning you drove off without saying a word.
(*Looks him over.*)

Mme. Ranevskaya. How you've aged, Firs.

Firs. I beg your pardon?

Lopahin. The lady says you've aged.

Firs. I've lived a long time; they were arranging my wedding and your papa wasn't born yet. (*Laughs.*) When freedom came I was already head footman. I wouldn't consent to be set free then; I stayed on with the master . . . (*Pause.*) I remember they were all very happy, but why they were happy, they didn't know themselves.

Lopahin. It was fine in the old days! At least there was flogging!

Firs (not hearing). Of course. The peasants kept to the masters, the masters kept to the peasants; but now they've all gone their own ways, and there's no making out anything.

Gayev. Be quiet, Firs. I must go to town tomorrow. They've promised to introduce me to a general who might let us have a loan.

Lopahin. Nothing will come of that. You won't even be able to pay the interest, you can be certain of that.

Mme. Ranevskaya. He's raving, there isn't any general. (*Enter TROFIMOV, ANYA, and VARYA.*)

Gayev. Here come our young people.

Anya. There's Mamma, on the bench.

Mme. Ranevskaya (tenderly). Come here, come along, my darlings.
(*Embraces ANYA and VARYA.*) If you only knew how I love you both!
Sit beside me—there, like that. (*All sit down.*)

Lopahin. Our perpetual student is always with the young ladies.

Trofimov. That's not any of your business.

Lopahin. He'll soon be fifty, and he's still a student!

Trofimov. Stop your silly jokes.

Lopahin. What are you so cross about, you queer bird?

Trofimov. Oh, leave me alone.

Lopahin (laughs). Allow me to ask you, what do you think of me?

Trofimov. What I think of you, Yermolay Alexeyevich, is this: you are a rich man who will soon be a millionaire. Well, just as a beast of prey, which devours everything that comes in its way, is necessary for the process of metabolism to go on, so you too are necessary. (*All laugh.*)

Varya. Better tell us something about the planets, Petya.

Mme. Ranevskaya. No, let's go on with yesterday's conversation.

Trofimov. What was it about?

Gayev. About man's pride.

Trofimov. Yesterday we talked a long time, but we came to no conclusion.

There is something mystical about man's pride in your sense of the word. Perhaps you're right, from your own point of view. But if you reason simply, without going into subtleties, then what call is there for pride? Is there any sense in it, if man is so poor a thing physiologically, and if, in the great majority of cases, he is coarse, stupid, and profoundly unhappy? We should stop admiring ourselves. We should work, and that's all.

Gayev. You die, anyway.

Trofimov. Who knows? And what does it mean—to die? Perhaps man has a hundred senses, and at his death only the five we know perish, while the other ninety-five remain alive.

Mme. Ranevskaya. How clever you are, Petya!

Lopahin (ironically). Awfully clever!

Trofimov. Mankind goes forward, developing its powers. Everything that is now unattainable for it will one day come within man's reach and be clear to him; only we must work, helping with all our might those who seek the truth. Here among us in Russia only the very few work as yet. The great majority of the intelligentsia, as far as I can see, seek nothing, do nothing, are totally unfit for work of any kind. They call themselves the intelligentsia, yet they are uncivil to their servants, treat the peasants like animals, are poor students, never read anything serious, do absolutely nothing at all, only talk about science, and have little appreciation of the arts. They are all solemn, have grim faces, they all philosophize and talk of weighty matters. And meanwhile the vast majority of us, ninety-nine out of a hundred, live like savages. At the least provocation—a punch in the jaw, and curses. They eat disgustingly, sleep in filth and stuffiness, bedbugs everywhere, stench and damp and moral slovenliness. And obviously, the only purpose of all our fine talk is to hoodwink ourselves and others. Show me where the public nurseries are that we've heard so much about, and the libraries. We read about them in novels, but in

reality they don't exist, there is nothing but dirt, vulgarity, and Asiatic backwardness. I don't like very solemn faces, I'm afraid of them, I'm afraid of serious conversations. We'd do better to keep quiet for a while.

Lopahin. Do you know, I get up at five o'clock in the morning, and I work from morning till night; and I'm always handling money, my own and other people's, and I see what people around me are really like. You've only to start doing anything to see how few honest, decent people there are. Sometimes when I lie awake at night, I think: "Oh, Lord, thou hast given us immense forests, boundless fields, the widest horizons, and living in their midst, we ourselves ought really to be giants."

Mme. Ranevskaya. Now you want giants! They're only good in fairy tales; otherwise they're frightening.

YEPIHODOV crosses the stage at the rear, playing the guitar.

Mme. Ranevskaya (*pensively*). There goes Yepihodov.

Anya (*pensively*). There goes Yepihodov.

Gayev. Ladies and gentlemen, the sun has set.

Trofimov. Yes.

Gayev (*in a low voice, declaiming as it were*). Oh, Nature, wondrous Nature, you shine with eternal radiance, beautiful and indifferent! You, whom we call our mother, unite within yourself life and death! You animate and destroy!

Varya (*pleadingly*). Uncle dear!

Anya. Uncle, again!

Trofimov. You'd better bank the yellow ball in the side pocket.

Gayev. I'm silent, I'm silent . . .

All sit plunged in thought. Stillness reigns. Only FIRS'S muttering is audible. Suddenly a distant sound is heard, coming from the sky as it were, the sound of a snapping string, mournfully dying away.

Mme. Ranevskaya. What was that?

Lopahin. I don't know. Somewhere far away, in the pits, a bucket's broken loose; but somewhere very far away.

Gayev. Or it might be some sort of bird, perhaps a heron.

Trofimov. Or an owl . . .

Mme. Ranevskaya (*shudders*). It's weird, somehow. (*Pause.*)

Firs. Before the calamity the same thing happened—the owl screeched, and the samovar hummed all the time.

Gayev. Before what calamity?

Firs. Before the Freedom. (*Pause.*)

Mme. Ranevskaya. Come, my friends, let's be going. It's getting dark.

(*To ANYA.*) You have tears in your eyes. What is it, my little one?

(*Embraces her.*)

Anya. I don't know, Mamma; it's nothing.

Trofimov. Somebody's coming.

A TRAMP appears, wearing a shabby white cap and an overcoat. He is slightly drunk.

Tramp. Allow me to inquire, will this short cut take me to the station?

Gayev. It will. Just follow that road.

Tramp. My heartfelt thanks. (*Coughing.*) The weather is glorious. (*Recites*)

"My brother, my suffering brother . . . Go down to the Volga!

Whose groans . . . ?" (*To VARYA.*) Mademoiselle, won't you spare
30 kopecks for a hungry Russian?

VARYA, frightened, cries out.

Lopahin (angrily). Even panhandling has its proprieties.

Mme. Ranevskaya (scared). Here, take this. (*Fumbles in her purse.*) I
haven't any silver . . . never mind, here's a gold piece.

Tramp. My heartfelt thanks. (*Exits. Laughter.*)

Varya (frightened). I'm leaving, I'm leaving . . . Oh, Mamma dear, at home
the servants have nothing to eat, and you gave him a gold piece!

Mme. Ranevskaya. What are you going to do with me? I'm such a fool.
When we get home, I'll give you everything I have. Yermolay
Alexeyevich, you'll lend me some more . . .

Lopahin. Yes, Ma'am.

Mme. Ranevskaya. Come, ladies and gentlemen, it's time to be going.
Oh! Varya, we've settled all about your marriage. Congratulations!

Varya (through tears). Really, Mamma, that's not a joking matter.

Lopahin. "Aurelia, get thee to a nunnery, go . . ."

Gayev. And do you know, my hands are trembling: I haven't played
billiards in a long time.

Lopahin. "Aurelia, nymph, in your orisons, remember me!"

Mme. Ranevskaya. Let's go, it's almost suppertime.

Varya. He frightened me! My heart's pounding.

Lopahin. Let me remind you, ladies and gentlemen, on the 22nd of
August the cherry orchard will be up for sale. Think about that!
Think!

All except TROFIMOV and ANYA go out.

Anya (laughs). I'm grateful to that tramp, he frightened Varya and so we're alone.

Trofimov. Varya's afraid we'll fall in love with each other all of a sudden.

She hasn't left us alone for days. Her narrow mind can't grasp that we're above love. To avoid the petty and illusory, everything that prevents us from being free and happy—that is the goal and meaning of our life. Forward! Do not fall behind, friends!

Anya (strikes her hands together). How well you speak! (Pause.) It's wonderful here today.

Trofimov. Yes, the weather's glorious.

Anya. What have you done to me, Petya? Why don't I love the cherry orchard as I used to? I loved it so tenderly. It seemed to me there was no spot on earth lovelier than our orchard.

Trofimov. All Russia is our orchard. Our land is vast and beautiful, there are many wonderful places in it. (Pause.) Think of it, Anya, your grandfather, your great-grandfather and all your ancestors were serf owners, owners of living souls, and aren't human beings looking at you from every tree in the orchard, from every leaf, from every trunk? Don't you hear voices? Oh, it's terrifying! Your orchard is a fearful place, and when you pass through it in the evening or at night, the old bark on the trees gleams faintly, and the cherry trees seem to be dreaming of things that happened a hundred, two hundred years ago and to be tormented by painful visions. What is there to say? We're at least two hundred years behind, we've really achieved nothing yet, we have no definite attitude to the past, we only philosophize, complain of the blues, or drink vodka. It's all so clear: in order to live in the present, we should first redeem our past, finish with it, and we can expiate it only by suffering, only by extraordinary, unceasing labor. Realize that, Anya.

Anya. The house in which we live has long ceased to be our own, and I will leave it, I give you my word.

Trofimov. If you have the keys, fling them into the well and go away. Be free as the wind.

Anya (in ecstasy). How well you put that!

Trofimov. Believe me, Anya, believe me! I'm not yet thirty, I'm young, I'm still a student—but I've already suffered so much. In winter I'm hungry, sick, harassed, poor as a beggar, and where hasn't Fate driven me? Where haven't I been? And yet always, every moment of the day and night, my soul is filled with inexplicable premonitions. . . . I have a premonition of happiness, Anya. . . . I see it already!

Anya (pensively). The moon is rising.

YEPIHODOV is heard playing the same mournful tune on the guitar. The moon rises. Somewhere near the poplars VARYA is looking for ANYA and calling "Anya, where are you?"

Trofimov. Yes, the moon is rising. (*Pause.*) There it is, happiness, it's approaching, it's coming nearer and nearer, I can already hear its footsteps. And if we don't see it, if we don't know it, what does it matter? Others will!

Varya's voice. "Anya! Where are you?"

Trofimov. That Varya again! (*Angrily.*) It's revolting!

Anya. Never mind, let's go down to the river. It's lovely there.

Trofimov. Come on. (*They go.*)

Varya's voice. "Anya! Anya!"

ACT III

A drawing room separated by an arch from a ballroom. Evening. Chandelier burning. The Jewish band is heard playing in the anteroom. In the ballroom they are dancing the Grand Rond. PISHCHIK is heard calling, "Promenade à une paire." PISHCHIK and CHARLOTTA, TROFIMOV and MME. RANEVSKAYA, ANYA and the POST-OFFICE CLERK, VARYA and the STATIONMASTER, and others, enter the drawing room in couples. DUNYASHA is in the last couple. VARYA weeps quietly, wiping her tears as she dances. All parade through drawing room. PISHCHIK calling "Grand rond, balancez!" and "Les cavaliers à genoux et remerciez vos dames!" FIRS wearing a dress coat, brings in soda water on a tray. PISHCHIK and TROFIMOV enter the drawing room.

Pishchik. I'm a full-blooded man; I've already had two strokes. Dancing's hard work for me; but as they say, "If you run with the pack, you can bark or not, but at least wag your tail." Still, I'm as strong as a horse. My late lamented father, who would have his joke, God rest his soul, used to say, talking about our origin, that the ancient line of the Simeonov-Pishchiks was descended from the very horse that Caligula had made a senator. (*Sits down.*) But the trouble is, I have no money. A hungry dog believes in nothing but meat. (*Snores and wakes up at once.*) It's the same with me—I can think of nothing but money.

Trofimov. You know, there is something equine about your figure.

Pishchik. Well, a horse is a fine animal—one can sell a horse.

Sound of billiards being played in an adjoining room. VARYA appears in the archway.

Trofimov (teasing her). Madam Lopahina! Madam Lopahina!

Varya (angrily). Mancy master!

Trofimov. Yes, I am a mangy master and I'm proud of it.

Varya (reflecting bitterly). Here we've hired musicians, and what shall we pay them with? (*Exits.*)

Trofimov (to PISHCHIK). If the energy you have spent during your lifetime looking for money to pay interest had gone into something else, in the end you could have turned the world upside down.

Pishchik. Nietzsche, the philosopher, the greatest, most famous of men, that colossal intellect, says in his works that it is permissible to forge bank notes.

Trofimov. Have you read Nietzsche?

Pishchik. Well . . . Dashenka told me . . . And now I've got to the point where forging banknotes is about the only way out for me. . . . The day after tomorrow I have to pay 310 rubles—I already have 130 . . . (*Feels in his pockets. In alarm.*) The money's gone! I've lost my money! (*Through tears.*) Where's my money? (*Joyfully.*) Here it is! Inside the lining. . . I'm all in a sweat. . . .

Enter MME. RANEVSKAYA and CHARLOTTA.

Mme. Ranevskaya (hums the "Lezginka"). Why isn't Leonid back yet? What is he doing in town? (*To DUNYASHA.*) Dunyasha, offer the musicians tea.

Trofimov. The auction hasn't taken place, most likely.

Mme. Ranevskaya. It's the wrong time to have the band, and the wrong time to give a dance. Well, never mind. (*Sits down and hums softly.*)

Charlotta (hands PISHCHIK a pack of cards). Here is a pack of cards. Think of any card you like.

Pishchik. I've thought of one.

Charlotta. Shuffle the pack now. That's right. Give it here, my dear Mr. Pishchik. *Ein, zwei, drei!* Now look for it—it's in your side pocket.

Pishchik (taking the card out of his pocket). The eight of spades! Perfectly right! Just imagine!

Charlotta (holding pack of cards in her hands. To TROFIMOV). Quickly, name the top card.

Trofimov. Well, let's see—the queen of spades.

Charlotta. Right! (*To PISHCHIK.*) Now name the top card.

Pishchik. The ace of hearts.

Charlotta. Right! (*Claps her hands and the pack of cards disappears.*) Ah, what lovely weather it is today! (*A mysterious feminine voice which seems to come from under the floor answers her*) “Oh, yes, it’s magnificent weather, Madam.”

Charlotta. You are my best ideal.

Voice. And I find you pleasing too, Madam.

Stationmaster (applauding). The lady ventriloquist, bravo!

Pishchik (amazed). Just imagine! Enchanting Charlotta Ivanovna, I’m simply in love with you.

Charlotta. In love? (*Shrugs her shoulders.*) Are you capable of love? *Guter Mensch, aber schlechter Musikant* [A good man but a bad musician]!

Trofimov (claps PISHCHIK on the shoulder). You old horse, you!

Charlotta. Attention please! One more trick! (*Takes a plaid from a chair.*) Here is a very good plaid; I want to sell it. (*Shaking it out.*) Does anyone want to buy it?

Pishchik (in amazement). Just imagine!

Charlotta. *Ein, zwei, drei!* (*Raises the plaid quickly, behind it stands ANYA. She curtseys, runs to her mother, embraces her, and runs back into the ballroom, amidst general enthusiasm.*)

Mme. Ranevskaya (applauds). Bravo! Bravo!

Charlotta. Now again! *Ein, zwei, drei!* (*Lifts the plaid; behind it stands VARYA bowing.*)

Pishchik (running after her). The rascal! What a woman, what a woman! (*Exits.*)

Mme. Ranevskaya. And Leonid still isn’t here. What is he doing in town so long? I don’t understand. It must be all over by now. Either the estate has been sold, or the auction hasn’t taken place. Why keep us in suspense so long?

Varya (trying to console her). Uncle’s bought it, I feel sure of that.

Trofimov (mockingly). Oh, yes!

Varya. Great-aunt sent him an authorization to buy it in her name, and to transfer the debt. She’s doing it for Anya’s sake. And I’m sure that God will help us, and Uncle will buy it.

Mme. Ranevskaya. Great-aunt sent fifteen thousand to buy the estate in her name, she doesn’t trust us, but that’s not even enough to pay the interest. (*Covers her face with her hands.*) Today my fate will be decided, my fate—

Trofimov (teasing VARYA). Madam Lopahina!

Varya (angrily). Perpetual student! Twice already you've been expelled from the university.

Mme. Ranevskaya. Why are you so cross, Varya? He's teasing you about Lopahin. Well, what of it? If you want to marry Lopahin, go ahead. He's a good man, and interesting, if you don't want to, don't. Nobody's compelling you, my pet!

Varya. Frankly, Mamma dear, I take this thing seriously; he's a good man and I like him.

Mme. Ranevskaya. All right then, marry him. I don't know what you're waiting for.

Varya. But, Mamma, I can't propose to him myself. For the last two years everyone's been talking to me about him—talking. But he either keeps silent, or else cracks jokes. I understand; he's growing rich, he's absorbed in business—he has no time for me. If I had money, even a little, say, 100 rubles, I'd throw everything up and go far away—I'd go into a nunnery.

Trofimov. What a blessing . . .

Varya. A student ought to be intelligent. (*Softly, with tears in her voice.*) How homely you've grown, Petya! How old you look! (*To MME. RANEVSKAYA, with dry eyes.*) But I can't live without work, Mamma dear; I must keep busy every minute.

Enter YASHA.

Yasha (hardly restraining his laughter). Yepihodov has broken a billiard cue! (*Exits.*)

Varya. Why is Yepihodov here? Who allowed him to play billiards? I don't understand these people! (*Exits.*)

Mme. Ranevskaya. Don't tease her, Petya. She's unhappy enough without that.

Trofimov. She bustles so—and meddles in other people's business. All summer long she's given Anya and me no peace. She's afraid of a love affair between us. What business is it of hers? Besides, I've given no grounds for it, and I'm far from such vulgarity. We are above love.

Mme. Ranevskaya. And I suppose I'm beneath love? (*Anxiously.*) What can be keeping Leonid? If I only knew whether the estate has been sold or not. Such a calamity seems so incredible to me that I don't know what to think—I feel lost. . . . I could scream. . . . I could do something stupid. . . . Save me, Petya, tell me something, talk to me!

Trofimov. Whether the estate is sold today or not, isn't it all one? That's all done with long ago—there's no turning back, the path is overgrown. Calm yourself, my dear. You mustn't deceive yourself. For once in your life you must face the truth.

Mme. Ranevskaya. What truth? You can see the truth, you can tell it from falsehood, but I seem to have lost my eyesight, I see nothing. You settle every great problem so boldly, but tell me, my dear boy, isn't it because you're young, because you don't yet know what one of your problems means in terms of suffering? You look ahead fearlessly, but isn't it because you don't see and don't expect anything dreadful, because life is still hidden from your young eyes? You're bolder, more honest, more profound than we are, but think hard, show just a bit of magnanimity, spare me. After all, I was born here, my father and mother lived here, and my grandfather; I love this house. Without the cherry orchard, my life has no meaning for me, and if it really must be sold, then sell me with the orchard. (*Embraces TROFIMOV, kisses him on the forehead.*) My son was drowned here. (*Weeps.*) Pity me, you good, kind fellow!

Trofimov. You know, I feel for you with all my heart.

Mme. Ranevskaya. But that should have been said differently, so differently! (*Takes out her handkerchief—a telegram falls on the floor.*) My heart is so heavy today—you can't imagine! The noise here upsets me—my inmost being trembles at every sound—I'm shaking all over. But I can't go into my own room; I'm afraid to be alone. Don't condemn me, Petya. . . . I love you as though you were one of us, I would gladly let you marry Anya—I swear I would—only, my dear boy, you must study—you must take your degree—you do nothing, you let yourself be tossed by Fate from place to place—it's so strange. It's true, isn't it? And you should do something about your beard, to make it grow somehow! (*Laughs.*) You're so funny!

Trofimov (picks up the telegram). I've no wish to be a dandy.

Mme. Ranevskaya. That's a telegram from Paris. I get one every day. One yesterday and one today. That savage is ill again—he's in trouble again. He begs forgiveness, implores me to go to him, and really I ought to go to Paris to be near him. Your face is stern, Petya; but what is there to do, my dear boy? What am I to do? He's ill, he's alone and unhappy, and who is to look after him, who is to keep him from doing the wrong thing, who is to give him his medicine on time? And why hide it or keep still about it—I love him! That's clear. I love him, love him! He's a millstone round my neck, he'll drag me to the bottom,

but I love that stone, I can't live without it. (*Presses TROFIMOV's hand.*) Don't think badly of me, Petya, and don't say anything, don't say . . .

Trofimov (through tears). Forgive me my frankness in heaven's name; but, you know, he robbed you!

Mme. Ranevskaya. No, no, no, you mustn't say such things! (*Covers her ears.*)

Trofimov. But he's a scoundrel! You're the only one who doesn't know it. He's a petty scoundrel—a nonentity!

Mme. Ranevskaya (controlling her anger). You are twenty-six or twenty-seven years old, but you're still a schoolboy.

Trofimov. That may be.

Mme. Ranevskaya. You should be a man at your age. You should understand people who love—and ought to be in love yourself. You ought to fall in love! (*Angrily.*) Yes, yes! And it's not purity in you, it's prudishness, you're simply a queer fish, a comical freak!

Trofimov (horrified). What is she saying?

Mme. Ranevskaya. "I am above love!" You're not above love, but simply, as our Firs says, you're an addlehead. At your age not to have a mistress!

Trofimov (horrified). This is frightful! What is she saying! (*Goes rapidly into the ballroom, clutching his head.*) It's frightful—I can't stand it, I won't stay! (*Exits, but returns at once.*) All is over between us! (*Exits into anteroom.*)

Mme. Ranevskaya (shouts after him). Petya! Wait! You absurd fellow, I was joking. Petya!

Sound of somebody running quickly downstairs and suddenly falling down with a crash. ANYA and VARYA scream. *Sound of laughter a moment later.*

Mme. Ranevskaya. What's happened?

ANYA runs in.

Anya (laughing). Petya's fallen downstairs! (*Runs out.*)

Mme. Ranevskaya. What a queer bird that Petya is!

STATIONMASTER, standing in the middle of the ballroom, recites Alexey Tolstoy's "Magdalene" to which all listen, but after a few lines, the sound of a waltz is heard from the anteroom and the reading breaks off. All dance. TROFIMOV, ANYA, VARYA, and MME. RANEVSKAYA enter from the anteroom.

Mme. Ranevskaya. Petya, you pure soul, please forgive me. . . . Let's dance.

Dances with PETYA. ANYA and VARYA dance. FIRS enters, puts his stick down by the side door. YASHA enters from the drawing room and watches the dancers.

Yasha. Well, grandfather?

Firs. I'm not feeling well. In the old days it was generals, barons, and admirals that were dancing at our balls, and now we have to send for the Post Office clerk and the Stationmaster, and even they aren't too glad to come. I feel kind of shaky. The old master that's gone, their grandfather, dosed everyone with sealing wax, whatever ailed 'em. I've been taking sealing wax every day for twenty years or more. Perhaps that's what's kept me alive.

Yasha. I'm fed up with you, Grandpop. (*Yawns.*) It's time you croaked.

Firs. Oh, you addlehead! (*Mumbles.*)

TROFIMOV and MME. RANEVSKAYA dance from the ballroom into the drawing room.

Mme. Ranevskaya. Merci. I'll sit down a while. (*Sits down.*) I'm tired. Enter ANYA.

Anya (excitedly). There was a man in the kitchen just now who said the cherry orchard was sold today.

Mme. Ranevskaya. Sold to whom?

Anya. He didn't say. He's gone. (*Dances off with TROFIMOV.*)

Yasha. It was some old man gabbing, a stranger.

Firs. And Leonid Andreyevich isn't back yet, he hasn't come. And he's wearing his lightweight between-season overcoat; like enough, he'll catch cold. Ah, when they're young they're green.

Mme. Ranevskaya. This is killing me. Go, Yasha, find out to whom it has been sold.

Yasha. But the old man left long ago. (*Laughs.*)

Mme. Ranevskaya. What are you laughing at? What are you pleased about?

Yasha. That Yepihodov is such a funny one. A funny fellow, Two-and-Twenty Troubles!

Mme. Ranevskaya. Firs, if the estate is sold, where will you go?

Firs. I'll go where you tell me.

Mme. Ranevskaya. Why do you look like that? Are you ill? You ought to go to bed.

Firs. Yes! (*With a snigger.*) Me go to bed, and who's to hand things round?

Who's to see to things? I'm the only one in the whole house.

Yasha (*to MME. RANEVSKAYA*). Lubov Andreyevna, allow me to ask a favor of you, be so kind! If you go back to Paris, take me with you, I beg you. It's positively impossible for me to stay here. (*Looking around; sotto voce.*) What's the use of talking? You see for yourself, it's an uncivilized country, the people have no morals, and then the boredom! The food in the kitchen's revolting, and besides there's this Firs wanders about mumbling all sorts of inappropriate words. Take me with you, be so kind!

Enter PISHCHIK.

Pishchik. May I have the pleasure of a waltz with you, charming lady?

(*MME. RANEVSKAYA accepts.*) All the same, enchanting lady, you must let me have 180 rubles. . . . You must let me have (*dancing*) just one hundred and eighty rubles. (*They pass into the ballroom.*)

Yasha (*hums softly*). "Oh, wilt thou understand the tumult in my soul?"

In the ballroom a figure in a gray top hat and checked trousers is jumping about and waving its arms; shouts: "Bravo, Charlotta Ivanovna!"

Dunyasha (*stopping to powder her face; to FIRS*). The young Miss has ordered me to dance. There are so many gentlemen and not enough ladies. But dancing makes me dizzy, my heart begins to beat fast, Firs Nikolayevich. The Post Office clerk said something to me just now that quite took my breath away. (*Music stops.*)

Firs. What did he say?

Dunyasha. "You're like a flower," he said.

Yasha (*yawns*). What ignorance. (*Exits.*)

Dunyasha. "Like a flower!" I'm such a delicate girl. I simply adore pretty speeches.

Firs. You'll come to a bad end.

Enter YEPIHODOV.

Yepihodov (*to DUNYASHA*). You have no wish to see me, Avdotya Fyodorovna . . . as though I was some sort of insect. (*Sighs.*) Ah, life!

Dunyasha. What is it you want?

Yepihodov. Indubitably you may be right. (*Sighs.*) But of course, if one looks at it from the point of view, if I may be allowed to say so, and apologizing for my frankness, you have completely reduced me to a

state of mind. I know my fate. Every day some calamity befalls me, and I grew used to it long ago, so that I look upon my fate with a smile. You gave me your word, and though I—

Dunyasha. Let's talk about it later, please. But just now leave me alone, I am daydreaming. (*Plays with a fan.*)

Yepihodov. A misfortune befalls me every day; and if I may be allowed to say so, I merely smile, I even laugh.

Enter VARYA.

Varya (to YEPIHODOV). Are you still here? What an impudent fellow you are really! Run along, Dunyasha. (*To YEPIHODOV.*) Either you're playing billiards and breaking a cue, or you're wandering about the drawing room as though you were a guest.

Yepihodov. You cannot, permit me to remark, penalize me.

Varya. I'm not penalizing you; I'm just telling you. You merely wander from place to place, and don't do your work. We keep you as a clerk, but Heaven knows what for.

Yepihodov (offended). Whether I work or whether I walk, whether I eat or whether I play billiards, is a matter to be discussed only by persons of understanding and of mature years.

Varya (enraged). You dare say that to me—you dare? You mean to say I've no understanding? Get out of here at once! This minute!

Yepihodov (scared). I beg you to express yourself delicately.

Varya (beside herself). Clear out this minute! Out with you!

YEPIHODOV goes towards the door, VARYA following.

Varya. Two-and-Twenty Troubles! Get out—don't let me set eyes on you!

Exit YEPIHODOV. His voice is heard behind the door: "I shall lodge a complaint against you!"

Varya. Oh, you're coming back? (*She seizes the stick left near door by FIRS.*) Well, come then . . . come . . . I'll show you . . . Ah, you're coming?

You're coming? . . . Come . . . (*Swings the stick just as LOPAHIN enters.*)

Lopahin. Thank you kindly.

Varya (angrily and mockingly). I'm sorry.

Lopahin. It's nothing. Thank you kindly for your charming reception.

Varya. Don't mention it. (*Walks away, looks back and asks softly.*) I didn't hurt you, did I?

Lopahin. Oh, no, not at all. I shall have a large bump, though.

Voices from the ballroom. Lopahin is here! Lopahin!

Enter PISHCHIK.

Pishchik. My eyes do see, my ears do hear! (*Kisses LOPAHIN.*)

Lopahin. You smell of cognac, my dear friends. And we've been celebrating here, too.

Enter MME. RANEVSKAYA.

Mme. Ranevskaya. Is that you, Yermolay Alexeyevich? What kept you so long? Where's Leonid?

Lopahin. Leonid Andreyevich arrived with me. He's coming.

Mme. Ranevskaya. Well, what happened? Did the sale take place? Speak!

Lopahin (*embarrassed, fearful of revealing his joy*). The sale was over at four o'clock. We missed the train—had to wait till half past nine. (*Sighing heavily.*) Ugh. I'm a little dizzy.

Enter GAYEV. In his right hand he holds parcels, with his left he is wiping away his tears.

Mme. Ranevskaya. Well, Leonid? What news? (*Impatiently, through tears.*) Be quick, for God's sake!

Gayev (*not answering, simply waves his hand. Weeping, to FIRS.*) Here, take these; anchovies, Kerch herrings . . . I haven't eaten all day. What I've been through! (*The click of billiard balls comes through the open door of the billiard room and YASHA'S voice is heard: "Seven and eighteen!" GAYEV'S expression changes, he no longer weeps.*) I'm terribly tired. Firs, help me change. (*Exits, followed by FIRS.*)

Pishchik. How about the sale? Tell us what happened.

Mme. Ranevskaya. Is the cherry orchard sold?

Lopahin. Sold.

Mme. Ranevskaya. Who bought it?

Lopahin. I bought it.

Pause. *MME. RANEVSKAYA is overcome. She would fall to the floor were it not for the chair and table near which she stands.* *VARYA takes the keys from her belt, flings them on the floor in the middle of the drawing room and goes out.*

Lopahin. I bought it. Wait a bit, ladies and gentlemen, please, my head is swimming, I can't talk. (*Laughs.*) We got to the auction and Deriganov was there already. Leonid Andreyevich had only 15,000 and straight off Deriganov bid 30,000 over and above the mortgage. I saw how the land lay, got into the fight, bid 40,000. He bid 45,000. I bid fifty-five. He kept adding five thousands, I ten. Well . . . it came to

an end. I bid ninety above the mortgage and the estate was knocked down to me. Now the cherry orchard's mine! Mine! (*Laughs uproariously.*) Lord! God in Heaven! The cherry orchard's mine! Tell me that I'm drunk-out of my mind—that it's all a dream. (*Stamps his feet.*) Don't laugh at me! If my father and my grandfather could rise from their graves and see all that has happened—how their Yermolay, who used to be flogged, their half-literate Yermolay, who used to run about barefoot in winter, how that very Yermolay has bought the most magnificent estate in the world. I bought the estate where my father and grandfather were slaves, where they weren't even allowed to enter the kitchen. I'm asleep—it's only a dream—I only imagine it. . . . It's the fruit of your imagination, wrapped in the darkness of the unknown! (*Picks up the keys, smiling genially.*) She threw down the keys, wants to show she's no longer mistress here. (*Jingles keys.*) Well, no matter. (*The band is heard tuning up.*) Hey, musicians! Strike up! I want to hear you! Come, everybody, and see how Yermolay Lopahin will lay the ax to the cherry orchard and how the trees will fall to the ground. We will build summer cottages there, and our grandsons and great-grandsons will see a new life here. Music! Strike up!

The band starts to play. MME. RANEVSKAYA has sunk into a chair and is weeping bitterly.

Lopahin (reproachfully). Why, why didn't you listen to me? My dear friend, my poor friend, you can't bring it back now. (*Tearfully.*) Oh, if only this were over quickly! Oh, if only our wretched, disordered life were changed!

Pishchik (takes him by the arm; sotto voce). She's crying. Let's go into the ballroom. Let her be alone. Come. (*Takes his arm and leads him into the ballroom.*)

Lopahin. What's the matter? Musicians, play so I can hear you! Let me have things the way I want them. (*Ironically.*) Here comes the new master, the owner of the cherry orchard. (*Accidentally he trips over a little table, almost upsetting the candelabra.*) I can pay for everything. (*Exits with PISHCHIK. MME. RANEVSKAYA, alone, sits huddled up, weeping bitterly. Music plays softly. Enter ANYA and TROFIMOV quickly, ANYA goes to her mother and falls on her knees before her. TROFIMOV stands in the doorway.*)

Anya. Mamma, Mamma, you're crying! Dear, kind, good Mamma, my precious, I love you, I bless you! The cherry orchard is sold, it's gone,

that's true, quite true. But don't cry, Mamma, life is still before you, you still have your kind, pure heart. Let us go, let us go away from here, darling. We will plant a new orchard, even more luxuriant than this one. You will see it, you will understand, and like the sun at evening, joy—deep, tranquil joy—will sink into your soul, and you will smile, Mamma. Come, darling, let us go.

ACT IV

Scene as in Act I. No window curtains or pictures, only a little furniture, piled up in a corner, as if for sale. A sense of emptiness. Near the outer door and at the back, suitcases, bundles, etc., are piled up. A door open on the left and the voices of VARYA and ANYA are heard. LOPAHIN stands waiting. YASHA holds a tray with glasses full of champagne. YEPIHODOV in the anteroom is tying up a box. Behind the scene a hum of voices: peasants have come to say good-by. Voice of GAYEV: "Thanks, brothers, thank you."

Yasha. The country folk have come to say good-by. In my opinion, Yermolay Alexeyevich, they are kindly souls, but there's nothing in their heads. (*The hum dies away. Enter MME. RANEVSKAYA and GAYEV.*

She is not crying, but is pale, her face twitches and she cannot speak.)

Gayev. You gave them your purse, Luba. That won't do! That won't do!

Mme. Ranevskaya. I couldn't help it! I couldn't! (*They go out.*)

Lopahin (*calls after them*). Please, I beg you, have a glass at parting. I didn't think of bringing any champagne from town and at the station I could find only one bottle. Please, won't you? (*Pause.*) What's the matter, ladies and gentlemen, don't you want any? (*Moves away from the door.*) If I'd known, I wouldn't have bought it. Well, then I won't drink any, either. (*YASHA carefully sets the tray down on a chair.*) At least you have a glass, Yasha.

Yasha. Here's to the travelers! And good luck to those that stay! (*Drinks.*)

This champagne isn't the real stuff, I can assure you.

Lopahin. Eight rubles a bottle. (*Pause.*) It's devilishly cold here.

Yasha. They didn't light the stoves today—it wasn't worth it, since we're leaving. (*Laughs.*)

Lopahin. Why are you laughing?

Yasha. It's just that I'm pleased.

Lopahin. It's October, yet it's as still and sunny as though it were summer. Good weather for building. (*Looks at his watch, and speaks off.*)

Bear in mind, ladies and gentlemen, the train goes in forty-seven minutes, so you ought to start for the station in twenty minutes. Better hurry up!

Enter TROFIMOV wearing an overcoat.

Trofimov. I think it's time to start. The carriages are at the door. The devil only knows what's become of my rubbers; they've disappeared.

(Calling off.) Anya! My rubbers are gone. I can't find them.

Lopahin. I've got to go to Kharkov. I'll take the same train you do. I'll spend the winter in Kharkov. I've been hanging round here with you, till I'm worn out with loafing. I can't live without work—I don't know what to do with my hands, they dangle as if they didn't belong to me.

Trofimov. Well, we'll soon be gone, then you can go on with your useful labors again.

Lopahin. Have a glass.

Trofimov. No, I won't.

Lopahin. So you're going to Moscow now?

Trofimov. Yes. I'll see them into town, and tomorrow I'll go on to Moscow.

Lopahin. Well, I'll wager the professors aren't giving any lectures, they're waiting for you to come.

Trofimov. That's none of your business.

Lopahin. Just how many years have you been at the university?

Trofimov. Can't you think of something new? Your joke's stale and flat.

(Looking for his rubbers.) We'll probably never see each other again, so allow me to give you a piece of advice at parting: don't wave your hands about! Get out of the habit. And another thing: building bungalows, figuring that summer residents will eventually become small farmers, figuring like that is just another form of waving your hands about. . . . Never mind, I love you anyway; you have fine, delicate fingers, like an artist; you have a fine, delicate soul.

Lopahin (embracing him). Good-by, my dear fellow. Thank you for everything.

Let me give you some money for the journey, if you need it.

Trofimov. What for? I don't need it.

Lopahin. But you haven't any.

Trofimov. Yes, I have, thank you. I got some money for a translation—here it is in my pocket. (Anxiously.) But where are my rubbers?

Varya (from the next room). Here! Take the nasty things. (Flings a pair of rubbers onto the stage.)

Trofimov. What are you so cross about, Varya? Hm . . . and these are not my rubbers.

Lopahin. I sowed three thousand acres of poppies in the spring, and now I've made 40,000 on them, clear profit; and when my poppies were in bloom, what a picture it was! So, as I say, I made 40,000; and I am offering you a loan because I can afford it. Why turn up your nose at it? I'm a peasant—I speak bluntly.

Trofimov. Your father was a peasant, mine was a druggist—that proves absolutely nothing whatever. (*LOPAHIN takes out his wallet.*) Don't, put that away! If you were to offer me two hundred thousand I wouldn't take it. I'm a free man. And everything that all of you, rich and poor alike, value so highly and hold so dear hasn't the slightest power over me. It's like so much fluff floating in the air. I can get on without you, I can pass you by, I'm strong and proud. Mankind is moving towards the highest truth, towards the highest happiness possible on earth, and I am in the front ranks.

Lopahin. Will you get there?

Trofimov. I will. (*Pause.*) I will get there, or I will show others the way to get there.

The sound of axes chopping down trees is heard in the distance.

Lopahin. Well, good-by, my dear fellow. It's time to leave. We turn up our noses at one another, but life goes on just the same. When I'm working hard, without resting, my mind is easier, and it seems to me that I too know why I exist. But how many people are there in Russia, brother, who exist nobody knows why? Well, it doesn't matter. That's not what makes the wheels go round. They say Leonid Andreyevich has taken a position in the bank, 6,000 rubles a year. Only, of course, he won't stick to it, he's too lazy. . . .

Anya (in the doorway). Mamma begs you not to start cutting down the cherry trees until she's gone.

Trofimov. Really, you should have more tact! (*Exits.*)

Lopahin. Right away—right away! Those men . . . (*Exits.*)

Anya. Has Firs been taken to the hospital?

Yasha. I told them this morning. They must have taken him.

Anya (to YEPIHODOV who crosses the room). Yepihodov, please find out if Firs has been taken to the hospital.

Yasha (offended). I told Yegor this morning. Why ask a dozen times?

Yepihodov. The aged Firs, in my definitive opinion, is beyond mending. It's time he was gathered to his fathers. And I can only envy him. (*Puts a suitcase down on a hatbox and crushes it.*) There now, of course. I knew it! (*Exits.*)

Yasha (mockingly). Two-and-Twenty Troubles!

Varya (through the door). Has Firs been taken to the hospital?

Anya. Yes.

Varya. Then why wasn't the note for the doctor taken too?

Anya. Oh! Then someone must take it to him. (*Exits.*)

Varya (from adjoining room). Where's Yasha? Tell him his mother's come and wants to say good-by.

Yasha (waves his hand). She tries my patience.

DUNYASHA has been occupied with the luggage. Seeing YASHA alone, she goes up to him.

Dunyasha. You might just give me one little look, Yasha. You're going away. . . . You're leaving me . . . (*Weeps and throws herself on his neck.*)

Yasha. What's there to cry about? (*Drinks champagne.*) In six days I shall be in Paris again. Tomorrow we get into an express train and off we go, that's the last you'll see of us. . . . I can scarcely believe it. *Vive la France!* It don't suit me here, I just can't live here. That's all there is to it. I'm fed up with the ignorance here, I've had enough of it. (*Drinks champagne.*) What's there to cry about? Behave yourself properly, and you'll have no cause to cry.

Dunyasha (powders her face, looking in pocket mirror). Do send me a letter from Paris. You know I loved you, Yasha, how I loved you! I'm a delicate creature, Yasha.

Yasha. Somebody's coming! (*Busies himself with the luggage; hums softly.*)

Enter MME. RANEVSKAYA, GAYEV, ANYA, and CHARLOTTA.

Gayev. We ought to be leaving. We haven't much time. (*Looks at YASHA.*) Who smells of herring?

Mme. Ranevskaya. In about ten minutes we should be getting into the carriages. (*Looks around the room.*) Good-by, dear old home, good-by, grandfather. Winter will pass, spring will come, you will no longer be here, they will have torn you down. How much these walls have seen! (*Kisses ANYA warmly.*) My treasure, how radiant you look! Your eyes are sparkling like diamonds. Are you glad? Very?

Anya (gaily). Very glad. A new life is beginning, Mamma.

Gayev. Well, really, everything is all right now. Before the cherry orchard was sold, we all fretted and suffered; but afterwards, when the question was settled finally and irrevocably, we all calmed down, and even felt quite cheerful. I'm a bank employee now, a financier. The yellow ball in the side pocket! And anyhow, you are looking better, Luba, there's no doubt of that.

Mme. Ranevskaya. Yes, my nerves are better, that's true. (*She is handed her hat and coat.*) I sleep well. Carry out my things, Yasha. It's time. (*To ANYA.*) We shall soon see each other again, my little girl. I'm going to Paris, I'll live there on the money your great-aunt sent us to buy the estate with—long live Auntie! But that money won't last long.

Anya. You'll come back soon, soon, Mamma, won't you? Meanwhile I'll study, I'll pass my high school examination, and then I'll go to work and help you. We'll read all kinds of books together, Mamma, won't we? (*Kisses her mother's hands.*) We'll read in the autumn evenings, we'll read lots of books, and a new wonderful world will open up before us. (*Falls into a reverie.*) Mamma, do come back.

Mme. Ranevskaya. I will come back, my precious. (*Embraces her daughter.*

Enter LOPAHIN and CHARLOTTA, who is humming softly.)

Gayev. Charlotta's happy: she's singing.

Charlotta (*picks up a bundle and holds it like a baby in swaddling clothes.*)

Bye, baby, bye. (*A baby is heard crying "Wah! Wah!"*) Hush, hush, my pet, my little one. "Wah! Wah!" I'm so sorry for you! (*Throws the bundle down.*) You will find me a position, won't you? I can't go on like this.

Lopahin. We'll find one for you, Charlotta Ivanovna, don't worry.

Gayev. Everyone's leaving us. Varya's going away. We've suddenly become of no use.

Charlotta. There's no place for me to live in town, I must go away. (*Hums.*)

Enter PISHCHIK.

Lopahin. There's nature's masterpiece!

Pishchik (*gasping*). Oh . . . let me get my breath . . . I'm in agony. . . . Esteemed friends . . . Give me a drink of water. . . .

Gayev. Wants some money, I suppose. No, thank you . . . I'll keep out of harm's way. (*Exits.*)

Pishchik. It's a long while since I've been to see you, most charming lady.

(*To LOPAHIN.*) So you are here . . . glad to see you, you intellectual giant . . . There . . . (*Gives LOPAHIN money.*) Here's 400 rubles, and I still owe you 840.

Lopahin (*shrugging his shoulders in bewilderment*). I must be dreaming . . .

Where did you get it?

Pishchik. Wait a minute . . . It's hot . . . A most extraordinary event!

Some Englishmen came to my place and found some sort of white clay on my land . . . (*To MME. RANEVSKAYA.*) And 400 for you . . .

most lovely . . . most wonderful . . . (*Hands her the money.*) The rest later. (*Drinks water.*) A young man in the train was telling me just now that a great philosopher recommends jumping off roofs. "Jump!" says he; "that's the long and the short of it!" (*In amazement.*) Just imagine! Some more water!

Lopahin. What Englishmen?

Pishchik. I leased them the tract with the clay on it for twenty-four years. . . . And now, forgive me, I can't stay. . . . I must be dashing on. . . . I'm going over to Znoikov. . . . to Kardamanov . . . I owe them all money . . . (*Drinks water.*) Good-by, everybody . . . I'll look in on Thursday. . . .

Mme. Ranevskaya. We're just moving into town; and tomorrow I go abroad.

Pishchik (upset). What? Why into town? That's why the furniture is like that . . . and the suitcases . . . Well, never mind! (*Through tears.*) Never mind . . . Men of colossal intellect, these Englishmen . . . Never mind . . . Be happy. God will come to your help . . . Never mind . . . Everything in this world comes to an end. (*Kisses MME. RANEVSKAYA'S hand.*) If the rumor reaches you that it's all up with me, remember this old . . . horse, and say: Once there lived a certain . . . Simeonov-Pishchik . . . the kingdom of Heaven be his . . . Glorious weather! . . . Yes . . . (*Exits, in great confusion, but at once returns and says in the doorway*) My daughter Dashenka sends her regards. (*Exits.*)

Mme. Ranevskaya. Now we can go. I leave with two cares weighing on me. The first is poor old Firs. (*Glancing at her watch.*) We still have about five minutes.

Anya. Mamma, Firs has already been taken to the hospital. Yasha sent him there this morning.

Mme. Ranevskaya. My other worry is Varya. She's used to getting up early and working; and now, with no work to do, she is like a fish out of water. She has grown thin and pale, and keeps crying, poor soul. (*Pause.*) You know this very well, Yermolay Alexeyevich; I dreamed of seeing her married to you, and it looked as though that's how it would be. (*Whispers to ANYA, who nods to CHARLOTTA and both go out.*) She loves you. You find her attractive. I don't know, I don't know why it is you seem to avoid each other; I can't understand it.

Lopahin. To tell you the truth, I don't understand it myself. It's all a puzzle. If there's still time, I'm ready now, at once. Let's settle it straight off, and have done with it! Without you, I feel I'll never be able to propose.

Mme. Ranevskaya. That's splendid. After all, it will only take a minute.

I'll call her at once. . . .

Lopahin. And luckily, here's champagne too. (*Looks at the glasses.*) Empty! Somebody's drunk it all. (*YASHA coughs.*) That's what you might call guzzling . . .

Mme. Ranevskaya (animatedly). Excellent! We'll go and leave you alone.

Yasha, allez! I'll call her. (*At the door.*) Varya, leave everything and come here. Come! (*Exits with YASHA.*)

Lopahin (looking at his watch). Yes . . . (*Pause behind the door, smothered laughter and whispering; at last, enter VARYA.*)

Varya (looking over the luggage in leisurely fashion). Strange, I can't find it . . .

Lopahin. What are you looking for?

Varya. Packed it myself, and I don't remember . . . (*Pause.*)

Lopahin. Where are you going now, Varya?

Varya. I? To the Ragulins'. I've arranged to take charge there—as housekeeper, if you like.

Lopahin. At Yashnevo? About fifty miles from here. (*Pause.*) Well, life in this house is ended!

Varya (examining luggage). Where is it? Perhaps I put it in the chest. Yes, life in this house is ended . . . There will be no more of it.

Lopahin. And I'm just off to Kharkov—by this next train. I've a lot to do there. I'm leaving Yepihodov here . . . I've taken him on.

Varya. Oh!

Lopahin. Last year at this time it was snowing, if you remember, but now it's sunny and there's no wind. It's cold, though . . . It must be three below.

Varya. I didn't look. (*Pause.*) And besides, our thermometer's broken. (*Pause. Voice from the yard:* "Yermolay Alexeyevich!")

Lopahin (as if he had been waiting for the call). This minute! (*Exits quickly.* VARYA sits on the floor and sobs quietly, her head on a bundle of clothes. *Enter MME. RANEVSKAYA cautiously.*)

Mme. Ranevskaya. Well? (*Pause.*) We must be going.

Varya (wiping her eyes). Yes, it's time, Mamma dear. I'll be able to get to the Ragulins' today, if only we don't miss the train.

Mme. Ranevskaya (at the door). Anya, put your things on. (*Enter ANYA, GAYEV, CHARLOTTA. GAYEV wears a heavy overcoat with a hood. Enter servants and coachmen. YEPIHODOV bustles about the luggage.*)

Mme. Ranevskaya. Now we can start on our journey.

Anya (joyfully). On our journey!

Gayev. My friends, my dear, cherished friends, leaving this house forever,

can I be silent? Can I at leave-taking refrain from giving utterance to those emotions that now fill my being?

Anya (imploringly). Uncle!

Varya. Uncle, Uncle dear, don't.

Gayev (forlornly). I'll bank the yellow in the side pocket . . . I'll be silent . . .

Enter TROFIMOV, then LOPAHIN.

Trofimov. Well, ladies and gentlemen, it's time to leave.

Lopahin. Yepihodov, my coat.

Mme. Ranevskaya. I'll sit down just a minute. It seems as though I'd never before seen what the walls of this house were like, the ceilings, and now I look at them hungrily, with such tender affection.

Gayev. I remember when I was six years old sitting on that window sill on Whitsunday, watching my father going to church.

Mme. Ranevskaya. Has everything been taken?

Lopahin. I think so. (*Putting on his overcoat.*) Yepihodov, see that everything's in order.

Yépihodov (in a husky voice). You needn't worry, Yermolay Alexeyevich.

Lopahin. What's the matter with your voice?

Yépihodov. I just had a drink of water. I must have swallowed something.

Yasha (contemptuously). What ignorance!

Mme. Ranevskaya. When we're gone, not a soul will be left here.

Lopahin. Until the spring.

VARYA pulls an umbrella out of a bundle, as though about to hit someone with it. LOPAHIN pretends to be frightened.

Varya. Come, come, I had no such idea!

Trofimov. Ladies and gentlemen, let's get into the carriages—it's time. The train will be in directly.

Varya. Petya, there they are, your rubbers, by that trunk. (*Tearfully*) And what dirty old things they are!

Trofimov (puts on rubbers). Let's go, ladies and gentlemen.

Gayev (greatly upset, afraid of breaking down). The train . . . the station . . . Three cushions in the side pocket, I'll bank this one in the corner . . .

Mme. Ranevskaya. Let's go.

Lopahin. Are we all here? No one in there? (*Locks the side door on the left.*)

There are some things stored here, better lock up. Let us go!

Anya. Good-by, old house! Good-by, old life!

Trofimov. Hail to you, new life!

Exit with ANYA. VARYA looks round the room and goes out slowly. YASHA and CHARLOTTA with her dog go out.

Lopahin. And so, until the spring. Go along, friends . . . Bye-bye! (*Exits.*)

MME. RANEVSKAYA and GAYEV remain alone. As though they had been waiting for this, they throw themselves on each other's necks, and break into subdued, restrained sobs, afraid of being overheard.

Gayev (in despair). My sister! My sister!

Mme. Ranevskaya. Oh, my orchard—my dear, sweet, beautiful orchard!

My life, my youth, my happiness—good-by! Good-by! (Voice of ANYA, gay and summoning: "Mamma!" Voice of TROFIMOV, gay and excited: "Halloo!")

Mme. Ranevskaya. One last look at the walls, at the windows . . . Our poor mother loved to walk about this room . . .

Gayev. My sister, my sister! (*Voice of ANYA:* "Mamma!" *Voice of TROFIMOV:* "Halloo!")

Mme. Ranevskaya. We're coming.

They go out. The stage is empty. The sound of doors being locked, of carriages driving away. Then silence. In the stillness is heard the muffled sound of the ax striking a tree, a mournful, lonely sound. Footsteps are heard. FIRS appears in the doorway on the right. He is dressed as usual in a jacket and white waistcoat and wears slippers. He is ill.

Firs (goes to the door, tries the handle). Locked! They've gone . . . (*Sits down on the sofa.*) They've forgotten me . . . Never mind . . . I'll sit here a bit . . . I'll wager Leonid Andreyevich hasn't put his fur coat on, he's gone off in his light overcoat . . . (*Sighs anxiously.*) I didn't keep an eye on him . . . Ah, when they're young, they're green . . . (*Mumbles something indistinguishable.*) Life has gone by as if I had never lived. (*Lies down.*) I'll lie down a while . . . There's no strength left in you, old fellow; nothing is left, nothing. Ah, you addlehead! (*Lies motionless. A distant sound is heard coming from the sky as it were, the sound of a snapping string mournfully dying away. All is still again, and nothing is heard but the strokes of the ax against a tree far away in the orchard.*)

George Bernard Shaw

1856–1950

George Bernard Shaw was born in Dublin, on July 26, 1856. His father, George Carr Shaw, was an unsuccessful corn merchant and an alcoholic. His mother was a talented musician, who taught Shaw, at an early age, to love and understand music.

Shaw had very little formal education. When he was ten he went to Wesleyan Connexional School, later Wesley College, in Dublin; four years later, he began work as a clerk in a land agent's office. He hated the work as much as he had previously hated school, and in 1876 he left Dublin for London. There his mother supported him by giving music lessons while Shaw wrote five novels which for some time he could not get published.

In 1885 Shaw began to write criticism, reviewing books and later music and drama for periodicals. His opinions were often startling to his readers. He championed Wagner, who was then new and unpopular. He attacked Shakespeare, partly for the shock value of it, and partly to gain recognition of Ibsen, whose work he admired. Shaw's *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* was published in 1891.

When he was twenty-six, Shaw became a socialist. He later said that the reading of Marx's *Capital* was the turning point in his life. Shaw joined the Fabian Society in 1884 and was soon a popular speaker on socialism.

Shaw's socialist opinions formed the basis for several of his plays, including the first one, *Widower's Houses*, produced in 1892. It dealt with the evils of slum landlords. This play encountered violent criticism which, typically, convinced Shaw that he was meant to be a dramatist.

His first critical success was *Candida*, produced in 1897. With the money *The Devil's Disciple* made in the United States in 1900, Shaw

was freed from the necessity of writing criticism for a living. In 1898 he married Charlotte Payne-Townshend, a wealthy Irish woman and a fellow Fabian.

Shaw had many unusual convictions, and he delighted in championing causes that were unpopular in his time, such as socialism and feminism. He was a life-long vegetarian and an anti-vivisectionist. He attacked compulsory vaccination and was scornful of doctors. He advocated the acceptance of a new alphabet.

Shaw presented many of his controversial ideas in his plays and the sometimes lengthy introductions to them. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1925. With the prize money he set up the Anglo-Swedish Literary Alliance. He refused both a knighthood and the Order of Merit. In his long lifetime he wrote more than fifty plays. He died November 2, 1950, at his home at Ayot St. Lawrence, Hertfordshire, England.

G. B. S. (as he was often called) was, among other things, an enemy of complacency. He delighted in shocking people, in stinging them out of their calmly accepted, conventional ideas. Few controversial subjects escaped the sharp attack of his wit. Religion, war, evolution, philanthropy—these are only a few of the topics on which he turned the bright light of his attention.

His greatest delight was to shock the English. He loved to take one of their common prejudices and turn it upside down. In his battle against English complacency, he used three powerful weapons—paradox, irony, and humor. All are evident in the drama that is reprinted here.

The Man of Destiny was first produced in 1897. Think back to that time. It is before World War I, before Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin, before World War II and the Cold War. For most Englishmen the embodiment of all political evil was Napoleon. He had been dead for seventy-five years, but he was still the arch villain. He was the epitome of violence, of autocracy, of treachery. He was all that is

Notes from the artist: ". . . Shaw, dressed in his favorite suit, swinging an ax, considered by some to be his characteristic manner of approaching moral and social issues! In the background is the heroine of his play Saint Joan, and the quotation is from Man and Superman."

G. Bernard Shaw

The true artist will let his wife starve, his children go barefoot, his mother drudge for his living at seventy, sooner than work at anything but his art.

un-English. He was a figure to frighten children and foreign offices. He was as close to being the devil incarnate as anyone ever was.

Yet Shaw, for an English audience, makes Napoleon the hero of his play. Here is the young leader, only two days after the Battle of Lodi. It was at Lodi that Napoleon first caught the attention of Europe. Overnight his name became one to conjure with. Shaw depicts him, indeed, as ruthless, ambitious, cruel. But there is no doubt that he is a hero.

What kind of man is Shaw's Napoleon? He is more than ambitious and cruel. He is also cunning, shrewd, and intelligent. Shaw would not permit the arch villain to appear stupid. It is the English, Shaw seems to be saying, who are the dull, stupid ones. Yet the English, he also is saying, finally defeated Napoleon. How could that be?

Napoleon himself, in the play, explains this. "The English are a race apart," he says. When an Englishman "wants a thing, he never tells himself that he wants it. He waits patiently until there comes into his mind, no one knows how, a burning conviction that it is his moral and religious duty to conquer those who possess the thing he wants. Then he becomes irresistible." The Englishman, Napoleon adds, "is never at a loss for an effective moral attitude." And he goes on to recount all the hypocrisies that underlie English life and opinion.

Paradox is piled on paradox in this play. Napoleon comes close to outwitting himself with his own cunning. The Lady is equally shrewd, but she too is defeated in the end. Only the English, with their invulnerable "effective moral attitude," are victorious.

Thus the play attacks not only English complacency with respect to Napoleon, but also English hypocrisy. The English never see anything clearly, Shaw appears to be saying. They are constantly fooling themselves. At heart, they are exactly what they say Napoleon is; that is, ruthless, grasping, and ambitious. Napoleon in the play, on the other hand, has some of the virtues the English claim to have but really do not: chivalry toward women, for instance. Above all, Shaw's Napoleon delights in conversation. He delights to match verbal wits with people. The Lieutenant, who may stand in the play for the English, cannot keep up with him. His ignorance is invincible. The Lady pleases Napoleon because she tries to outwit him. The English never tried to outwit Napoleon; they simply defeated him.

"It is even now impossible to live in England without sometimes feeling how much that country lost in not being conquered by him,"

says Shaw in his introduction to the play. The English, in other words, could have learned something from Napoleon, but they refused to do so. They thought they knew everything already.

Shaw admired strong men—what some of his contemporaries called “supermen.” He wrote a play about Julius Caesar that portrayed him as having many of the characteristics that Napoleon has in this play: wit, cunning, a knowledge of human nature. But Shaw admired the English, too, even though he never stopped making fun of them. He decried their moral denseness, their hypocrisy, their pompous conceit. Yet they were, for Shaw, a nation to be reckoned with. They were “a race apart.” In his heart he loved them.

It should be remembered that Shaw himself was not English but Irish. England was his adopted country, but he never ceased to view it with the wry understanding of his native land. And Napoleon says one thing that may be the key to Shaw’s view of the English. The Lady admits that her grandmother was Irish. “Yes: I forgot the Irish,” Napoleon replies. “An English army led by an Irish general: that might be a match for a French army led by an Italian general.” The Duke of Wellington, who defeated Napoleon at Waterloo, was, in fact, an Irishman. But the impression we have is that Shaw is here talking about himself. And that is the most delicate, and delicious, irony of all.

The Man of Destiny

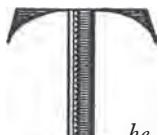
CAST OF CHARACTERS

NAPOLEON

A LIEUTENANT

GIUSEPPE

A STRANGE LADY



*T*he twelfth of May, 1796, in north Italy, at Tavazzano, on the road from Lodi to Milan. The afternoon sun is blazing serenely over the plains of Lombardy, treating the Alps with respect and the anthills with indulgence, neither disgusted by the basking of the swine in the villages nor hurt by its cool reception in the churches, but ruthlessly disdainful of two hordes of mischievous insects which are the French and Austrian armies. Two days before, at Lodi, the Austrians tried to prevent the French from crossing the river by the narrow bridge there; but the French, commanded by a general aged 27, NAPOLEON BONAPARTE, who does not respect the rules of war, rushed the fireswept bridge, supported by a tremendous cannonade in which the young general assisted with his own hands. Cannonading is his technical specialty: he has been trained in the artillery under the old régime, and made perfect in the military arts of shirking his duties, swindling the paymaster over travelling expenses, and dignifying war with the noise and smoke of cannon, as depicted in all military portraits. He is, however, an original observer, and has perceived, for the first time since the invention of gunpowder, that a cannon ball, if it strikes a man, will kill him. To a thorough grasp of this remarkable discovery he adds a highly evolved faculty for physical geography and for the calculation of times and distances. He has

prodigious powers of work, and a clear realistic knowledge of human nature in public affairs, having seen it exhaustively tested in that department during the French Revolution. He is imaginative without illusions, and creative without religion, loyalty, patriotism, or any of the common ideals. Not that he is incapable of these ideals: on the contrary, he has swallowed them all in his boyhood, and now, having a keen dramatic faculty, is extremely clever at playing upon them by the arts of the actor and stage manager. Withal, he is no spoiled child. Poverty, ill luck, the shifts of impecunious shabby-gentility, repeated failure as a would-be author, humiliation as a rebuffed time server, reproof and punishment as an incompetent and dishonest officer, an escape from dismissal from the service so narrow that if the emigration of the nobles had not raised the value of even the most rascally lieutenant to the famine price of a general he would have been swept contemptuously from the army: these trials have ground his conceit out of him, and forced him to be self-sufficient and to understand that to such men as he is the world will give nothing that he cannot take from it by force. In this the world is not free from cowardice and folly; for NAPOLEON, as a merciless cannonader of political rubbish, is making himself useful: indeed, it is even now impossible to live in England without sometimes feeling how much that country lost in not being conquered by him as well as by Julius Caesar.

However, on this May afternoon in 1796, it is early days with him. He has but recently been promoted general, partly by using his wife to seduce the Directory (then governing France); partly by the scarcity of officers caused by the emigration as aforesaid; partly by his faculty of knowing a country, with all its roads, rivers, hills, and valleys, as he knows the palm of his hand; and largely by that new faith of his in the efficacy of firing cannons at people. His army is, as to discipline, in a state which has so greatly shocked some modern writers before whom the following story has been enacted that they, impressed with the later glory of "L'Empereur," have altogether refused to credit it. But NAPOLEON is not L'Empereur yet: his men call him Le Petit Caporal, as he is still in the stage of gaining influence over them by displays of pluck. He is not in a position to force his will on them in orthodox military fashion by the cat-o'-nine-tails. The French Revolution, which has escaped suppression solely through, the monarchy's habit of being at least four years in arrear with its soldiers in the matter of pay, has substituted for that habit, as far as

possible, the habit of not paying at all, except in promises and patriotic flatteries which are not compatible with martial law of the Prussian type. NAPOLEON has therefore approached the Alps in command of men without money, in rags, and consequently indisposed to stand much discipline, especially from upstart generals. This circumstance, which would have embarrassed an idealist soldier, has been worth a thousand cannon to NAPOLEON. He has said to his army, "You have patriotism and courage; but you have no money, no clothes, and hardly anything to eat. In Italy there are all these things, and glory as well, to be gained by a devoted army led by a general who regards loot as the natural right of the soldier. I am such a general. En avant, mes enfants!" The result has entirely justified him. The army conquers Italy as the locusts conquered Cyprus. They fight all day and march all night, covering impossible distances and appearing in incredible places, not because every soldier carries a field marshal's baton in his knapsack, but because he hopes to carry at least half a dozen silver forks there next day.

It must be understood, by the way, that the French Army does not make war on the Italians. It is there to rescue them from the tyranny of their Austrian conquerors, and confer republican institutions on them; so that in incidentally looting them it merely makes free with the property of its friends, who ought to be grateful to it, and perhaps would be if ingratitude were not the proverbial failing of their country. The Austrians, whom it fights, are a thoroughly respectable regular army, well disciplined, commanded by gentlemen versed in orthodox campaigning: at the head of them Beaulieu, practising the classic art of war under orders from Vienna, and getting horribly beaten by NAPOLEON, who acts on his own responsibility in defiance of professional precedents or orders from Paris. Even when the Austrians win a battle, all that is necessary is to wait until their routine obliges them to return to their quarters for afternoon tea, so to speak, and win it back again from them: a course pursued later on with brilliant success at Marengo. On the whole, with his foe handicapped by Austrian statesmanship, classic generalship, and the exigencies of the aristocratic social structure of Viennese society, NAPOLEON finds it possible to be irresistible without working heroic miracles. The world, however, likes miracles and heroes, and is quite incapable of conceiving the action of such forces as academic militarism or Viennese drawing-roomism. Hence it has already begun to manufacture "L'Empereur," and thus to make it difficult for

the romanticists of a hundred years later to credit the hitherto unrecorded little scene now in question at Tavazzano.

The best quarters in Tavazzano are at a little inn, the first house reached by travellers passing through the place from Milan to Lodi. It stands in a vineyard; and its principal room, a pleasant refuge from the summer heat, is open so widely at the back to this vineyard that it is almost a large veranda. The bolder children, much excited by the alarms and excursions of the past few days, and by an irruption of French troops at six o'clock, know that the French commander has quartered himself in this room, and are divided between a craving to peep in at the front windows, and a mortal dread of the sentinel, a young gentleman-soldier who, having no natural moustache, has had a most ferocious one painted on his face with boot blacking by his sergeant. As his heavy uniform, like all the uniforms of that day, is designed for parade without the least reference to his health or comfort, he perspires profusely in the sun; and his painted moustache has run in little streaks down his chin and round his neck, except where it has dried in stiff japanned flakes and had its sweeping outline chipped off in grotesque little bays and headlands, making him unspeakably ridiculous in the eye of History a hundred years later, but monstrous and horrible to the contemporary north Italian infant, to whom nothing would seem more natural than that he should relieve the monotony of his guard by pitchforking a stray child up on his bayonet, and eating it uncooked. Nevertheless one girl of bad character, in whom an instinct of privilege with soldiers is already stirring, does peep in at the safest window for a moment before a glance and a clink from the sentinel sends her flying. Most of what she sees she has seen before: the vineyard at the back, with the old wine-press and a cart among the vines; the door close on her right leading to the street entry; the landlord's best sideboard, now in full action for dinner, further back on the same side; the fireplace on the other side with a couch near it; another door, leading to the inner rooms, between it and the vineyard; and the table in the middle set out with a repast of Milanese risotto, cheese, grapes, bread, olives, and a big wickered flask of red wine.

The landlord, GIUSEPPE GRANDI, she knows well. He is a swarthy vivacious shrewdly cheerful black-curled bullet-headed grinning little innkeeper of 40. Naturally an excellent host, he is in the highest spirits this evening at his good fortune in having as his guest the French commander to protect him against the license of the troops.

He actually sports a pair of gold earrings which would otherwise have been hidden carefully under the wine-press with his little equipment of silver plate.

NAPOLEON, sitting facing her on the further side of the table, she sees for the first time. He is working hard, partly at his meal, which he has discovered how to dispatch in ten minutes by attacking all the courses simultaneously (this practice is the beginning of his downfall), and partly at a military map on which he from time to time marks the position of the forces by taking a grape skin from his mouth and planting it on the map with his thumb like a wafer. There is no revolutionary untidiness about his dress or person; but his elbow has displaced most of the dishes and glasses; and his long hair trails into the risotto when he forgets it and leans more intently over the map.

Giuseppe. Will your excellency—

Napoleon (intent on his map, but cramming himself mechanically with his left hand).

Don't talk. I'm busy.

Giuseppe (with perfect good humour). Excellency: I obey.

Napoleon. Some red ink.

Giuseppe. Alas! excellency, there is none.

Napoleon (with Corsican facetiousness). Kill something and bring me its blood.

Giuseppe (grinning). There is nothing but your excellency's horse, the sentinel, the lady upstairs, and my wife.

Napoleon. Kill your wife.

Giuseppe. Willingly, your excellency; but unhappily I am not strong enough. She would kill me.

Napoleon. That will do equally well.

Giuseppe. Your excellency does me too much honour. (*Stretching his hand towards the flask*) Perhaps some wine will answer your excellency's purpose.

Napoleon (hastily protecting the flask, and becoming quite serious). Wine! No: that would be waste. You are all the same: waste! waste! waste! (*He marks the map with gravy, using his fork as a pen.*) Clear away. (*He finishes his wine; pushes back his chair; and uses his napkin, stretching his legs and leaning back, but still frowning and thinking.*)

Giuseppe (clearing the table and removing the things to a tray on the sideboard). Every man to his trade, excellency. We innkeepers have

plenty of cheap wine: we think nothing of spilling it. You great generals have plenty of cheap blood: you think nothing of spilling it. Is it not so, excellency?

Napoleon. Blood costs nothing: wine costs money. (*He rises and goes to the fireplace.*)

Giuseppé. They say you are careful of everything except human life, excellency.

Napoleon. Human life, my friend, is the only thing that takes care of itself. (*He throws himself at his ease on the couch.*)

Giuseppé (admiring him). Ah, excellency, what fools we all are beside you! If I could only find out the secret of your success!

Napoleon. You would make yourself Emperor of Italy, eh?

Giuseppé. Too troublesome, excellency: I leave all that to you. Besides, what would become of my inn if I were Emperor? See how you enjoy looking on at me whilst I keep the inn for you and wait on you! Well, I shall enjoy looking on at you whilst you become Emperor of Europe, and govern the country for me. (*As he chatters, he takes the cloth off deftly without removing the map, and finally takes the corners in his hands and the middle in his mouth, to fold it up.*)

Napoleon. Emperor of Europe, eh? Why only Europe?

Giuseppé. Why, indeed? Emperor of the world, excellency! Why not? (*He folds and rolls up the cloth, emphasizing his phrase by the steps of the process.*) One man is like another (*fold*): one country is like another (*fold*): one battle is like another. (*At the last fold, he slaps the cloth on the table and deftly rolls it up, adding, by way of peroration*) Conquer one: conquer all. (*He takes the cloth to the sideboard, and puts it in a drawer.*)

Napoleon. And govern for all; fight for all; be everybody's servant under cover of being everybody's master. *Giuseppé.*

Giuseppé (at the sideboard). Excellency?

Napoleon. I forbid you to talk to me about myself.

Giuseppé (coming to the foot of the couch). Pardon. Your excellency is so unlike other great men. It is the subject they like best.

Napoleon. Well, talk to me about the subject they like next best, whatever that may be.

Giuseppé (unabashed). Willingly, your excellency. Has your excellency by any chance caught a glimpse of the lady upstairs?

Napoleon (sitting up promptly). How old is she?

Giuseppé. The right age, excellency.

Napoleon. Do you mean seventeen or thirty?

Giuseppe. Thirty, excellency.

Napoleon. Good-looking?

Giuseppe. I cannot see with your excellency's eyes: every man must judge that for himself. In my opinion, excellency, a fine figure of a lady.
(Slyly) Shall I lay the table for her collation here?

Napoleon (brusquely, rising). No: lay nothing here until the officer for whom I am waiting comes back. (*He looks at his watch, and takes to walking to and fro between the fireplace and the vineyard.*)

Giuseppe (with conviction). Excellency: believe me, he has been captured by the accursed Austrians. He dare not keep you waiting if he were at liberty.

Napoleon (turning at the edge of the shadow of the veranda). Giuseppe: if that turns out to be true, it will put me into such a temper that nothing short of hanging you and your whole household, including the lady upstairs, will satisfy me.

Giuseppe. We are all cheerfully at your excellency's disposal, except the lady. I cannot answer for her; but no lady could resist you, General.

Napoleon (sourly, resuming his march). Hm! You will never be hanged. There is no satisfaction in hanging a man who does not object to it.

Giuseppe (sympathetically). Not the least in the world, excellency: is there? (*NAPOLEON again looks at his watch, evidently growing anxious.*) Ah, one can see that you are a great man, General: you know how to wait. If it were a corporal now, or a sub-lieutenant, at the end of three minutes he would be swearing, fuming, threatening, pulling the house about our ears.

Napoleon. Giuseppe: your flatteries are insufferable. Go and talk outside. (*He sits down again at the table, with his jaws in his hands, and his elbows propped on the map, poring over it with a troubled expression.*)

Giuseppe. Willingly, your excellency. You shall not be disturbed. (*He takes up the tray and prepares to withdraw.*)

Napoleon. The moment he comes back, send him to me.

Giuseppe. Instantaneously, your excellency.

A Lady's Voice (calling from some distant part of the inn). Giusep-pe! (*The voice is very musical, and the two final notes make an ascending interval.*)

Napoleon (startled). Who's that?

Giuseppe. The lady, excellency.

Napoleon. The lady upstairs?

Giuseppe. Yes, excellency. The strange lady.

Napoleon. Strange? Where does she come from?

Giuseppe (with a shrug). Who knows? She arrived here just before your excellency in a hired carriage belonging to the Golden Eagle at Borghetto. By herself, excellency. No servants. A dressing-bag and a trunk: that is all. The postillion says she left a horse at the Golden Eagle. A charger, with military trappings.

Napoleon. A woman with a charger! French or Austrian?

Giuseppe. French, excellency.

Napoleon. Her husband's charger, no doubt. Killed at Lodi, poor fellow.

The Lady's Voice (the two final notes now making a peremptory descending interval). Giuseppe!

Napoleon (rising to listen). That's not the voice of a woman whose husband was killed yesterday.

Giuseppe. Husbands are not always regretted, excellency. (*Calling*) Coming, lady, coming. (*He makes for the inner door.*)

Napoleon (arresting him with a strong hand on his shoulder). Stop. Let her come. *Voice.* Giuseppe!! (*Impatiently.*)

Giuseppe. Let me go, excellency. It is my point of honour as an innkeeper to come when I am called. I appeal to you as a soldier.

A Man's Voice (outside, at the inn door, shouting). Here, someone. Hollo! Landlord! Where are you? (*Somebody raps vigorously with a whip handle on a bench in the passage.*)

Napoleon (suddenly becoming the commanding officer again and throwing GIUSEPPE off). My man at last. (*Pointing to the inner door*) Go. Attend to your business: the lady is calling you. (*He goes to the fireplace and stands with his back to it with a determined military air.*)

Giuseppe (with bated breath, snatching up his tray). Certainly, excellency. (*He hurries out by the inner door.*)

The Man's Voice (impatiently). Are you all asleep here?

The other door is kicked rudely open. A dusty sub-lieutenant bursts into the room. He is a tall chuckle-headed young man of 24, with the complexion and style of a man of rank, and a self-assurance on that ground which the French Revolution has failed to shake in the smallest degree. He has a thick silly lip, an eager credulous eye, an obstinate nose, and a loud confident voice. A young man without fear, without reverence, without imagination, without sense, hopelessly insusceptible to the Napoleonic or any other idea, stupendously egotistical, eminently qualified to rush in where angels fear to

tread, yet of a vigorous babbling vitality which bustles him into the thick of things. He is just now boiling with vexation, attributable by a superficial observer to his impatience at not being promptly attended to by the staff of the inn, but in which a more discerning eye can perceive a certain moral depth, indicating a more permanent and momentous grievance. On seeing NAPOLEON, he is sufficiently taken aback to check himself and salute; but he does not betray by his manner any of that prophetic consciousness of Marengo and Austerlitz, Waterloo and St. Helena, or the Napoleonic pictures of Delaroche and Meissonier, which later ages expect from him.

Napoleon (watch in hand). Well, sir, you have come at last. Your instructions were that I should arrive here at six, and find you waiting for me with my mail from Paris and with despatches. It is now twenty minutes to eight. You were sent on this service as a hard rider with the fastest horse in the camp. You arrive a hundred minutes late, on foot. Where is your horse?

The Lieutenant (moodily pulling off his gloves and dashing them with his cap and whip on the table). Ah! where indeed? That's just what I should like to know, General. (With emotion) You don't know how fond I was of that horse.

Napoleon (angrily sarcastic). Indeed! (With sudden misgiving) Where are the letters and despatches?

The Lieutenant (importantly, rather pleased than otherwise at having some remarkable news). I don't know.

Napoleon (unable to believe his ears). You don't know!

Lieutenant. No more than you do, General. Now I suppose I shall be court-martialled. Well, I don't mind being court-martialled; but (with solemn determination) I tell you, General, if ever I catch that innocent-looking youth, I'll spoil his beauty, the slimy little liar! I'll make a picture of him. I'll—

Napoleon (advancing from the hearth to the table). What innocent-looking youth? Pull yourself together, sir, will you; and give an account of yourself.

Lieutenant (facing him at the opposite side of the table, leaning on it with his fists). Oh, I'm all right, General: I'm perfectly ready to give an account of myself. I shall make the court-martial thoroughly understand that the fault was not mine. Advantage has been taken of the better side of my nature; and I'm not ashamed of it. But with all respect to you as my commanding officer, General, I say again that if ever I set eyes on that son of Satan, I'll—

Napoleon (angrily). So you said before.

Lieutenant (drawing himself upright). I say it again. Just wait until I catch him. Just wait: that's all. (*He folds his arms resolutely, and breathes hard, with compressed lips.*)

Napoleon. I am waiting, sir. For your explanation.

Lieutenant (confidently). You'll change your tone, General, when you hear what has happened to me.

Napoleon. Nothing has happened to you, sir: you are alive and not disabled. Where are the papers entrusted to you?

Lieutenant. Nothing happened to me! Nothing!! He swore eternal brotherhood with me. Was that nothing? He said my eyes reminded him of his sister's eyes. Was that nothing? He cried—actually cried—over the story of my separation from Angelica. Was that nothing? He paid for both bottles of wine, though he only ate bread and grapes himself. Perhaps you call that nothing. He gave me his pistols and his horse and his despatches—most important despatches—and let me go away with them. (*Triumphantly, seeing that he has reduced NAPOLEON to blank stupefaction*) Was that nothing?

Napoleon (enfeebled by astonishment). What did he do that for?

Lieutenant (as if the reason were obvious). To show his confidence in me, of course. (*NAPOLEON'S jaw does not exactly drop; but its hinges become nerveless.*) And I was worthy of his confidence: I brought them all back honourably. But would you believe it? when I trusted him with my pistols, and my horse, and my despatches—

Napoleon. What the devil did you do that for?

Lieutenant. I'm telling you: to show my confidence in him. And he betrayed it! abused it! never came back again! The thief! the swindler! the heartless treacherous little blackguard! You call that nothing, I suppose. But look here, General (*again resorting to the table with his fists for greater emphasis*): you may put up with this outrage from the Austrians if you like; but speaking for myself personally, I tell you that if ever I catch—

Napoleon (turning on his heel in disgust and irritably resuming his march to and fro). Yes: you have said that more than once already.

Lieutenant (excitedly). More than once! I'll say it fifty times; and what's more, I'll do it. You'll see, General. I'll show my confidence in him, so I will. I'll—

Napoleon. Yes, yes, sir: no doubt you will. What kind of man was he?

Lieutenant. Well, I should think you ought to be able to tell from his conduct the kind of man he was.

Napoleon. Psha! What was he like?

Lieutenant. Like! He was like—well, you ought to have just seen the fellow: that will give you a notion of what he was like. He won't be like it five minutes after I catch him; for I tell you that if ever—

Napoleon (*shouting furiously for the innkeeper*). Giuseppe! (*To the LIEUTENANT, out of all patience*) Hold your tongue, sir, if you can.

Lieutenant (*plaintively*). I warn you it's no use trying to put the blame on me. How was I to know the sort of fellow he was? (*He takes a chair from between the sideboard and the outer door; places it near the table; and sits down.*) If you only knew how hungry and tired I am, you'd have more consideration.

Giuseppe (*returning*). What is it, excellency?

Napoleon (*struggling with his temper*). Take this—this officer. Feed him; and put him to bed, if necessary. When he is in his right mind again, find out what has happened to him and bring me word. (*To the LIEUTENANT*) Consider yourself under arrest, sir.

Lieutenant (*with sulky stiffness*). I was prepared for that. It takes a gentleman to understand a gentleman. (*He throws his sword on the table.*)

Giuseppe (*with sympathetic concern*). Have you been attacked by the Austrians, Lieutenant? Dear! dear! dear!

Lieutenant (*contemptuously*). Attacked! I could have broken his back between my finger and thumb. I wish I had, now. No: it was by appealing to the better side of my nature: that's what I can't get over. He said he'd never met a man he liked so much as me. He put his handkerchief round my neck because a gnat bit me, and my stock was chafing it. Look! (*He pulls a handkerchief from his stock. GIUSEPPE takes it and examines it.*)

Giuseppe (*to NAPOLEON*). A lady's handkerchief, excellency. (*He smells it.*) Perfumed.

Napoleon. Eh? (*He takes it and looks at it attentively.*) Hm! (*He smells it.*) Ha! (*He walks thoughtfully across the room, looking at the hankkerchief, which he finally sticks in the breast of his coat.*)

Lieutenant. Good enough for him, anyhow. I noticed that he had a woman's hands when he touched my neck, with his coaxing fawning ways, the mean effeminate little hound. (*Lowering his voice with thrilling intensity*) But mark my words, General. If ever—

The Lady's Voice (*outside, as before*). Giuseppe!

Lieutenant (*petrified*). What was that?

Giuseppe. Only a lady upstairs, Lieutenant, calling me.

Lieutenant. Lady!

Voice. Giuseppe, Giuseppe: where are you?

Lieutenant (murderously). Give me that sword. (He snatches up the sword and draws it.)

Giuseppe (rushing forward and seizing his right arm). What are you thinking of, Lieutenant? It's a lady: don't you hear? It's a woman's voice.

Lieutenant. It's his voice, I tell you. Let me go. (He breaks away, and rushes to the edge of the veranda, where he posts himself, sword in hand, watching the door like a cat watching a mousehole.)

It opens; and the STRANGE LADY steps in. She is tall and extraordinarily graceful, with a delicately intelligent, apprehensive, questioning face: perception in the brow, sensitiveness in the nostrils, character in the chin: all keen, refined, and original. She is very feminine, but by no means weak: the lithe tender figure is hung on a strong frame: the hands and feet, neck and shoulders, are useful vigorous members, of full size in proportion to her stature, which perceptibly exceeds that of NAPOLEON and the innkeeper, and leaves her at no disadvantage with the LIEUTENANT. Only, her elegance and radiant charm keep the secret of her size and strength. She is not, judging by her dress, an admirer of the latest fashions of the Directory; or perhaps she uses up her old dresses for travelling. At all events she wears no jacket with extravagant lapels, no Graeco-Tallien sham chiton, nothing, indeed, that the Princesse de Lamballe might not have worn. Her dress of flowered silk is long-waisted, with a Watteau pleat behind, but with the panniers reduced to mere rudiments, as she is too tall for them. It is cut low in the neck, where it is eked out by a creamy fichu. She is fair, with golden-brown hair and grey eyes.

She enters with the self-possession of a woman accustomed to the privileges of rank and beauty. The innkeeper, who has excellent natural manners, is highly appreciative of her. NAPOLEON is smitten self-conscious. His colour deepens: he becomes stiffer and less at ease than before. She is advancing in an infinitely well-bred manner to pay her respects to him when the LIEUTENANT pounces on her and seizes her right wrist. As she recognizes him, she becomes deadly pale. There is no mistaking her expression: a revelation of some fatal error, utterly unexpected, has suddenly appalled her in the midst of tranquillity, security, and victory. The next moment a wave of angry colour rushes up from beneath the creamy fichu and drowns her

whole face. One can see that she is blushing all over her body. Even the LIEUTENANT, ordinarily incapable of observation, can see a thing when it is painted red for him. Interpreting the blush as the involuntary confession of black deceit confronted with its victim, he addresses her in a loud crow of retributive triumph.

Lieutenant. So I've got you, my lad. So you've disguised yourself, have you? (*In a voice of thunder, releasing her wrist*) Take off that skirt.

Giuseppe (remonstrating). Oh, Lieutenant!

Lady (affrighted, but highly indignant at his having dared to touch her).

Gentlemen: I appeal to you. (*To NAPOLEON*) You, sir, are an officer: a general. You will protect me, will you not?

Lieutenant. Never you mind him, General. Leave me to deal with him.

Napoleon. With him! With whom, sir? Why do you treat this lady in such a fashion?

Lieutenant. Lady! He's a man! the man I showed my confidence in. (*Raising his sword*) Here, you—

Lady (running behind NAPOLEON and in her agitation clasping to her breast the arm which he extends before her as a fortification). Oh, thank you, General.

Keep him away.

Napoleon. Nonsense, sir. This is certainly a lady (*she suddenly drops his arm and blushes again*); and you are under arrest. Put down your sword, sir, instantly.

Lieutenant. General: I tell you he's an Austrian spy. He passed himself off on me as one of General Masséna's staff this afternoon; and now he's passing himself off on you as a woman. Am I to believe my own eyes or not?

Lady. General: it must be my brother. He is on General Masséna's staff. He is very like me.

Lieutenant (*his mind giving way*). Do you mean to say that you're not your brother, but your sister? the sister who was so like me? who had my beautiful blue eyes? It's a lie: your eyes are not like mine: they're exactly like your own.

Napoleon (*with contained exasperation*). Lieutenant: will you obey my orders and leave the room, since you are convinced at last that this is no gentleman?

Lieutenant. Gentleman! I should think not. No gentleman would have abused my confid—

Napoleon (*out of all patience*). That will do, sir: do you hear? Will you leave the room? I order you to leave the room.

Lady. Oh pray let me go instead.

Napoleon (dryly). Excuse me, madam. With all possible respect for your brother, I do not yet understand what an officer on General Masséna's staff wants with my letters. I have some questions to put to you.

Giuseppe (discreetly). Come, Lieutenant. (*He opens the door.*)

Lieutenant. I'm off. General: take warning by me: be on your guard against the better side of your nature. (*To the lady*) Madam: my apologies. I thought you were the same person, only of the opposite sex; and that naturally misled me.

Lady (recovering her good humour). It was not your fault, was it? I'm so glad you're not angry with me any longer, Lieutenant. (*She offers her hand.*)

Lieutenant (bending gallantly to kiss it). Oh, madam, not the lea—(*Checking himself and looking at it*) You have your brother's hand.

And the same sort of ring!

Lady (sweetly). We are twins.

Lieutenant. That accounts for it. (*He kisses her hand.*) A thousand pardons. I didn't mind about the despatches at all: that's more the General's affair than mine: it was the abuse of my confidence through the better side of my nature. (*Taking his cap, gloves, and whip from the table and going*) You'll excuse my leaving you, General, I hope. Very sorry, I'm sure. (*He talks himself out of the room. GIUSEPPE follows him and shuts the door.*)

Napoleon (looking after them with concentrated irritation). Idiot!

The STRANGE LADY smiles sympathetically. He comes frowning down the room between the table and the fireplace, all his awkwardness gone now that he is alone with her.

Lady. How can I thank you, General, for your protection?

Napoleon (turning on her suddenly). My despatches: come! (*He puts out his hand for them.*)

Lady. General! (*She involuntarily puts her hands on her fichu as if to protect something there.*)

Napoleon. You tricked that blockhead out of them. You disguised yourself as a man. I want my despatches. They are there in the bosom of your dress, under your hands.

Lady (quickly removing her hands). Oh, how unkindly you are speaking to me! (*She takes her handkerchief from her fichu*) You frighten me. (*She touches her eyes as if to wipe away a tear.*)

Napoleon. I see you don't know me, madam, or you would save yourself the trouble of pretending to cry.

Lady (*producing an effect of smiling through her tears*). Yes, I do know you.

You are the famous General Buonaparte. (*She gives the name a marked Italian pronunciation: Bwauma-parr-te.*)

Napoleon (*angrily, with the French pronunciation*). Bonaparte, madam, Bonaparte. The papers, if you please.

Lady. But I assure you—(*He snatches the handkerchief rudely.*) General! (*Indignantly.*)

Napoleon (*taking the other handkerchief from his breast*). You lent one of your handkerchiefs to my lieutenant when you robbed him. (*He looks at the two handkerchiefs.*) They match one another. (*He smells them.*) The same scent. (*He flings them down on the table.*) I am waiting for my despatches. I shall take them, if necessary, with as little ceremony as I took the handkerchief.

Lady (*in dignified reproof*). General: do you threaten women?

Napoleon (*bluntly*). Yes.

Lady (*disconcerted, trying to gain time*). But I don't understand. I—

Napoleon. You understand perfectly. You came here because your Austrian employers calculated that I was six leagues away. I am always to be found where my enemies don't expect me. You have walked into the lion's den. Come! you are a brave woman. Be a sensible one: I have no time to waste. The papers. (*He advances a step ominously.*)

Lady (*breaking down in the childish rage of impotence, and throwing herself in tears on the chair left beside the table by the LIEUTENANT*). I brave! How little you know! I have spent the day in an agony of fear. I have a pain here from the tightening of my heart at every suspicious look, every threatening movement. Do you think everyone is as brave as you? Oh, why will not you brave people do the brave things? Why do you leave them to us, who have no courage at all? I'm not brave: I shrink from violence: danger makes me miserable.

Napoleon (*interested*). Then why have you thrust yourself into danger?

Lady. Because there is no other way: I can trust nobody else. And now it is all useless: all because of you, who have no fear because you have no heart, no feeling, no—(*She breaks off, and throws herself on her knees.*) Ah, General, let me go: let me go without asking any questions. You shall have your despatches and letters: I swear it.

Napoleon (*holding out his hand*). Yes: I am waiting for them.

She gasps, daunted by his ruthless promptitude into despair of moving him by cajolery. She looks up perplexedly at him, racking her

brains for some device to outwit him. He meets her regard inflexibly.

Lady (rising at last with a quiet little sigh). I will get them for you. They are in my room. (*She turns to the door.*)

Napoleon. I shall accompany you, madam.

Lady (drawing herself up with a noble air of offended delicacy). I cannot permit you, General, to enter my chamber.

Napoleon. Then you shall stay here, madam, whilst I have your chamber searched for my papers.

Lady (spitefully, openly giving up her plan). You may save yourself the trouble. They are not there.

Napoleon. No: I have already told you where they are (*pointing to her breast*).

Lady (with pretty piteousness). General: I only want to keep one little private letter. Only one. Let me have it.

Napoleon (cold and stern). Is that a reasonable demand, madam?

Lady (encouraged by his not refusing point-blank). No; but that is why you must grant it. Are your own demands reasonable? thousands of lives for the sake of your victories, your ambitions, your destiny! And what I ask is such a little thing. And I am only a weak woman, and you a brave man. (*She looks at him with her eyes full of tender pleading, and is about to kneel to him again.*)

Napoleon (brusquely). Get up, get up. (*He turns moodily away and takes a turn across the room, pausing for a moment to say, over his shoulder*) You're talking nonsense; and you know it. (*She sits down submissively on the couch. When he turns and sees her despair, he feels that his victory is complete, and that he may now indulge in a little play with his victim. He comes back and sits beside her. She looks alarmed and moves a little away from him; but a ray of rallying hope beams from her eye. He begins like a man enjoying some secret joke.*) How do you know I am a brave man?

Lady (amazed). You! General Buonaparte (*Italian pronunciation*).

Napoleon. Yes, I, General Bonaparte (*emphasizing the French pronunciation*).

Lady. Oh, how can you ask such a question? you! who stood only two days ago at the bridge at Lodi, with the air full of death, fighting a duel with cannons across the river! (*Shuddering.*) Oh, you do brave things.

Napoleon. So do you.

Lady. I! (*With a sudden odd thought*) Oh! Are you a coward?

Napoleon (laughing grimly and slapping his knees). That is the one question you must never ask a soldier. The sergeant asks after the recruit's height, his age, his wind, his limb, but never after his courage.

Lady (as if she had found it no laughing matter). Ah, you can laugh at fear. Then you don't know what fear is.

Napoleon. Tell me this. Suppose you could have got that letter by coining to me over the bridge at Lodi the day before yesterday! Suppose there had been no other way, and that this was a sure way—if only you escaped the cannon! (*She shudders and covers her eyes for a moment with her hands.*) Would you have been afraid?

Lady. Oh, horribly afraid, agonizingly afraid. (*She presses her hands on her heart.*) It hurts only to imagine it.

Napoleon (inflexibly). Would you have come for the despatches?

Lady (overcome by the imagined horror). Don't ask me. I must have come.

Napoleon. Why?

Lady. Because I must. Because there would have been no other way.

Napoleon (with conviction). Because you would have wanted my letter enough to bear your fear. (*He rises suddenly, and deliberately poses for an oration.*) There is only one universal passion: fear. Of all the thousand qualities a man may have, the only one you will find as certainly in the youngest drummer boy in my army as in me is fear. It is fear that makes men fight: it is indifference that makes them run away: fear is the mainspring of war. Fear! I know fear well, better than you, better than any woman. I once saw a regiment of good Swiss soldiers massacred by a mob in Paris because I was afraid to interfere: I felt myself a coward to the tips of my toes as I looked on at it. Seven months ago I revenged my shame by pounding that mob to death with cannon balls. Well, what of that? Has fear ever held a man back from anything he really wanted—or a woman either? Never. Come with me; and I will show you twenty thousand cowards who will risk death every day for the price of a glass of brandy. And do you think there are no women in the army braver than the men, though their lives are worth more? Psha! I think nothing of your fear or your bravery. If you had had to come across to me at Lodi, you would not have been afraid: once on the bridge, every other feeling would have gone down before the necessity—the necessity—for making your way to my side and getting what you wanted.

And now, suppose you had done all this! suppose you had come safely out with that letter in your hand, knowing that when the hour

came, your fear had tightened, not your heart, but your grip of your own purpose! that it had ceased to be fear, and had become strength, penetration, vigilance, iron resolution! how would you answer then if you were asked whether you were a coward?

Lady (rising). Ah, you are a hero, a real hero.

Napoleon. Pooh! there's no such thing as a real hero. (*He strolls about the room, making light of her enthusiasm, but by no means displeased with himself for having evoked it.*)

Lady. Ah yes, there is. There is a difference between what you call my bravery and yours. You wanted to win the Battle of Lodi for yourself and not for anyone else, didn't you?

Napoleon. Of course. (*Suddenly recollecting himself*) Stop: no (*He pulls himself piously together, and says, like a man conducting a religious service*) I am only the servant of the French Republic, following humbly in the footsteps of the heroes of classical antiquity. I win battles for humanity: for my country, not for myself.

Lady (disappointed). Oh, then you are only a womanish hero after all. (*She sits down again, all her enthusiasm gone.*)

Napoleon (greatly astonished). Womanish!

Lady (listlessly). Yes, like me. (*With deep melancholy*) Do you think that if I wanted those despatches only for myself, I dare venture into a battle for them? No: if that were all, I should not have the courage to ask to see you at your hotel, even. My courage is mere slavishness: it is of no use to me for my own purposes. It is only through love, through pity, through the instinct to save and protect someone else that I can do the things that terrify me.

Napoleon (contemptuously). Pshaw! (*He turns slightly away from her.*)

Lady. Aha! now you see that I'm not really brave. (*Relapsing into petulant listlessness*) But what right have you to despise me if you only win your battles for others? for your country! through patriotism! That is what I call womanish: it is so like a Frenchman!

Napoleon (furiously). I am no Frenchman.

Lady (innocently). I thought you said you won the Battle of Lodi for your country, General Bu—shall I pronounce it in Italian or French?

Napoleon. You are presuming on my patience, madam. I was born a French subject, but not in France.

Lady (affecting a marked access of interest in him). You were not born a subject at all, I think.

Napoleon (greatly pleased). Eh? Eh? You think not.

Lady. I am sure of it.

Napoleon. Well, well, perhaps not. (*The self-complacency of his assent catches his own ear. He stops short, reddening. Then, composing himself into a solemn attitude, modelled on the heroes of classical antiquity, he takes a high moral tone.*) But we must not live for ourselves alone, little one. Never forget that we should always think of others, and work for others, and lead and govern them for their own good. Self-sacrifice is the foundation of all true nobility of character.

Lady (again relaxing her attitude with a sigh). Ah, it is easy to see that you have never tried it, General.

Napoleon (indignantly, forgetting all about Brutus and Scipio). What do you mean by that speech, madam?

Lady. Haven't you noticed that people always exaggerate the value of the things they haven't got? The poor think they need nothing but riches to be quite happy and good. Everybody worships truth, purity, unselfishness, for the same reason: because they have no experience of them. Oh, if they only knew!

Napoleon (with angry derision). If they only knew! Pray do you know?

Lady. Yes. I had the misfortune to be born good. (*Glancing up at him for a moment*) And it is a misfortune, I can tell you, General. I really am truthful and unselfish and all the rest of it; and it's nothing but cowardice; want of character; want of being really, strongly, positively oneself.

Napoleon. Ha? (*Turning to her quickly with a flash of strong interest.*)

Lady (earnestly, with rising enthusiasm). What is the secret of your power? Only that you believe in yourself. You can fight and conquer for yourself and for nobody else. You are not afraid of your own destiny. You teach us what we all might be if we had the will and courage; and that (*suddenly sinking on her knees before him*) is why we all begin to worship you. (*She kisses his hands.*)

Napoleon (embarrassed). Tut! tut! Pray rise, madam.

Lady. Do not refuse my homage: it is your right. You will be Emperor of France—

Napoleon (hurriedly). Take care. Treason!

Lady (insisting). Yes, Emperor of France; then of Europe; perhaps of the world. I am only the first subject to swear allegiance. (*Again kissing his hand*) My Emperor!

Napoleon (overcome, raising her). Pray! pray! No, no: this is folly. Come: be calm, be calm. (*Petting her*) There! there! my girl.

Lady (*struggling with happy tears*). Yes, I know it is an impertinence in me to tell you what you must know far better than I do. But you are not angry with me, are you?

Napoleon. Angry! No, no: not a bit, not a bit. Come: you are a very clever and sensible and interesting woman. (*He pats her on the cheek.*) Shall we be friends?

Lady (*enraptured*). Your friend! You will let me be your friend! Oh! (*She offers him both her hands with a radiant smile.*) You see: I show my confidence in you.

This incautious echo of the LIEUTENANT undoes her. NAPOLEON starts: *his eyes flash: he utters a yell of rage.*

Napoleon. What!!!

Lady. What's the matter?

Napoleon. Show your confidence in me! So that I may show my confidence in you in return by letting you give me the slip with the despatches, eh? Ah, Dalila, Dalila, you have been trying your tricks on me; and I have been as gross a gull as my jackass of a lieutenant. (*Menacingly*) Come: the despatches. Quick: I am not to be trifled with now.

Lady (*flying round the couch*). General—

Napoleon. Quick, I tell you. (*He passes swiftly up the middle of the room and intercepts her as she makes for the vineyard.*)

Lady (*at bay, confronting him and giving way to her temper*). You dare address me in that tone.

Napoleon. Dare!

Lady. Yes, dare. Who are you that you should presume to speak to me in that coarse way. Oh, the vile, vulgar Corsican adventurer comes out in you very easily.

Napoleon (*beside himself*). You she devil! (*Savagely*) Once more, and only once, will you give me those papers or shall I tear them from you?—by force!

Lady. Tear them from me: by force!

As he glares at her like a tiger about to spring, she crosses her arms on her breast in the attitude of a martyr. The gesture and pose instantly awaken his theatrical instinct: he forgets his rage in the desire to show her that in acting, too, she has met her match. He keeps her a moment in suspense; then suddenly clears up his countenance; puts his hands behind him with provoking coolness; looks at her up and down a couple of times; takes a pinch of snuff; wipes his

fingers carefully and puts up his handkerchief, her heroic pose becoming more and more ridiculous all the time.

Napoleon (at last). Well?

Lady (disconcerted, but with her arms still crossed devotedly). Well: what are you going to do?

Napoleon. Spoil your attitude.

Lady. You brute! (*Abandoning the attitude, she comes to the end of the couch, where she turns with her back to it, leaning against it and facing him with her hands behind her.*)

Napoleon. Ah, that's better. Now listen to me. I like you. What's more, I value your respect.

Lady. You value what you have not got, then.

Napoleon. I shall have it presently. Now attend to me. Suppose I were to allow myself to be abashed by the respect due to your sex, your beauty, your heroism, and all the rest of it! Suppose I, with nothing but such sentimental stuff to stand between these muscles of mine and those papers which you have about you, and which I want and mean to have! suppose I, with the prize within my grasp, were to falter and sneak away with my hands empty; or, what would be worse, cover up my weakness by playing the magnanimous hero, and sparing you the violence I dared not use! would you not despise me from the depths of your woman's soul? Would any woman be such a fool? Well, Bonaparte can rise to the situation and act like a woman when it is necessary. Do you understand?

The LADY, without speaking, stands upright, and takes a packet of papers from her bosom. For a moment she has an intense impulse to dash them in his face. But her good breeding cuts her off from any vulgar method of relief. She hands them to him politely, only averting her head. The moment he takes them, she hurries across to the other side of the room; sits down; and covers her face with her hands.

Napoleon (gloating over the papers). Aha! That's right. That's right. (*Before he opens them, he looks at her and says*) Excuse me. (*He sees that she is hiding her face.*) Very angry with me, eh? (*He unties the packet, the seal of which is already broken, and puts it on the table to examine its contents.*)

Lady (quietly, taking down her hands and showing that she is not crying, but only thinking). No. You were right. But I am sorry for you.

Napoleon (pausing in the act of taking the uppermost paper from the packet). Sorry for me! Why?

Lady. I am going to see you lose your honour.

Napoleon. Hm! Nothing worse than that? (*He takes up the paper.*)

Lady. And your happiness.

Napoleon. Happiness! Happiness is the most tedious thing in the world to me. Should I be what I am if I cared for happiness? Anything else?

Lady. Nothing.

Napoleon. Good.

Lady. Except that you will cut a very foolish figure in the eyes of France.

Napoleon (quickly). What? (*The hand unfolding the paper involuntarily stops.*

The LADY looks at him enigmatically, in tranquil silence. He throws the letter down and breaks out into a torrent of scolding.) What do you mean? Eh? Are you at your tricks again? Do you think I don't know what these papers contain? I'll tell you, First, my information as to Beaulieu's retreat. There are only two things he can do—leather-brained idiot that he is!—shut himself up in Mantua or violate the neutrality of Venice by taking Peschiera. You are one of old Leatherbrain's spies: he has discovered that he has been betrayed, and has sent you to intercept the information at all hazards. As if that could save him from me, the old fool! The other papers are only my private letters from Paris, of which you know nothing.

Lady (prompt and businesslike). General: let us make a fair division.

Take the information your spies have sent you about the Austrian army; and give me the Paris correspondence. That will content me.

Napoleon (his breath taken away by the coolness of the proposal). A fair di—(*he gasps*). It seems to me, madam, that you have come to regard my letters as your own property, of which I am trying to rob you.

Lady (earnestly). No: on my honour I ask for no letter of yours: not a word that has been written by you or to you. That packet contains a stolen letter: a letter written by a woman to a man: a man not her husband: a letter that means disgrace, infamy—

Napoleon. A love letter?

Lady (bitter-sweetly). What else but a love letter could stir up so much hate?

Napoleon. Why is it sent to me? To put the husband in my power, eh?

Lady. No, no: it can be of no use to you: I swear that it will cost you nothing to give it to me. It has been sent to you out of sheer malice: solely to injure the woman who wrote it.

Napoleon. Then why not send it to her husband instead of to me?

Lady (completely taken aback). Oh! (Sinking back into the chair) I—I don't know.
(She breaks down.)

Napoleon. Aha! I thought so: a little romance to get the papers back. Per Bacco, I can't help admiring you. I wish I could lie like that. It would save me a great deal of trouble.

Lady (wringing her hands). Oh, how I wish I really had told you some lie! You would have believed me then. The truth is the one thing nobody will believe.

Napoleon (with coarse familiarity, treating her as if she were a vivandière). Capital! Capital! (*He puts his hands behind him on the table, and lifts himself on to it, sitting with his arms akimbo and his legs wide apart*) Come: I am a true Corsican in my love for stories. But I could tell them better than you if I set my mind to it. Next time you are asked why a letter compromising a wife should not be sent to her husband, answer simply that the husband wouldn't read it. Do you suppose, you goose, that a man wants to be compelled by public opinion to make a scene, to fight a duel, to break up his household, to injure his career by a scandal, when he can avoid it all by taking care not to know?

Lady (revolted). Suppose that packet contained a letter about your own wife?

Napoleon (offended, coming off the table). You are impudent, madam.

Lady (humbly). I beg your pardon. Caesar's wife is above suspicion.

Napoleon (with a deliberate assumption of superiority). You have committed an indiscretion. I pardon you. In future, do not permit yourself to introduce real persons in your romances.

Lady (politely ignoring a speech which is to her only a breach of good manners). General: there really is a woman's letter there. (*Pointing to the packet*) Give it to me.

Napoleon (with brute conciseness). Why?

Lady. She is an old friend: we were at school together. She has written to me imploring me to prevent the letter falling into your hands.

Napoleon. Why has it been sent to me?

Lady. Because it compromises the director Barras.

Napoleon (frowning, evidently startled). Barras! (*Haughtily*) Take care, madam. The director Barras is my attached personal friend.

Lady (nodding placidly). Yes. You became friends through your wife.

Napoleon. Again! Have I not forbidden you to speak of my wife? (*She keeps looking curiously at him, taking no account of the rebuke.* More and more irritated, he drops his haughty manner, of which he

is himself somewhat impatient, and says suspiciously, lowering his voice
Who is this woman with whom you sympathize so deeply?

Lady. Oh, General! How could I tell you that?

Napoleon (ill-humouredly, beginning to walk about again in angry perplexity). Ay, ay: stand by one another. You are all the same, you women.

Lady (indignantly). We are not all the same, any more than you are. Do you think that if *I* loved another man, I should pretend to go on loving my husband, or be afraid to tell him or all the world? But this woman is not made that way. She governs men by cheating them; and they like it, and let her govern them. (*She turns her back to him in disdain.*)

Napoleon (not attending to her). Barras? Barras? (*Very threateningly, his face darkening*) Take care. Take care: do you hear? You may go too far.

Lady (innocently turning her face to him). What's the matter?

Napoleon. What are you hinting at? Who is this woman?

Lady (meeting his angry searching gaze with tranquil indifference as she sits looking up at him). A vain, silly, extravagant creature, with a very able and ambitious husband who knows her through and through: knows that she has lied to him about her age, her income, her social position, about everything that silly women lie about: knows that she is incapable of fidelity to any principle or any person; and yet cannot help loving her—cannot help his man's instinct to make use of her for his own advancement with Barras.

Napoleon (in a stealthy coldly furious whisper). This is your revenge, you she cat, for having had to give me the letters.

Lady. Nonsense! Or do you mean that you are that sort of man?

Napoleon (exasperated, clasps his hands behind him, his fingers twitching, and says, as he walks irritably away from her to the fireplace). This woman will drive me out of my senses. (*To her*) Begone.

Lady (seated immovably). Not without that letter.

Napoleon. Begone, I tell you. (*Walking from the fireplace to the vineyard and back to the table*) You shall have no letter. I don't like you. You're a detestable woman, and as ugly as Satan. I don't choose to be pestered by strange women. Be off. (*He turns his back on her. In quiet amusement, she leans her cheek on her hand and laughs at him. He turns again, angrily mocking her.*) Ha! ha! ha! What are you laughing at?

Lady. At you, General. I have often seen persons of your sex getting into

a pet and behaving like children; but I never saw a really great man do it before.

Napoleon (*brutally, flinging the words in her face*). Psha! Flattery! Flattery! Coarse, impudent flattery!

Lady (*springing up with a bright flush in her cheeks*). Oh, you are too bad. Keep your letters. Read the story of your own dishonour in them; and much good may they do you. Good-bye. (*She goes indignantly towards the inner door*.)

Napoleon. My own—! Stop. Come back. Come back, I order you. (*She proudly disregards his savagely peremptory tone and continues on her way to the door. He rushes at her; seizes her by the arm; and drags her back.*) Now, what do you mean? Explain. Explain. I tell you, or— (*Threatening her. She looks at him with unflinching defiance.*) Rrrr! you obstinate devil, you. (*Throwing her arm away*) Why can't you answer a civil question?

Lady (*deeply offended by his violence*). Why do you ask me? You have the explanation.

Napoleon. Where?

Lady (*pointing to the letters on the table*). There. You have only to read it.

He snatches the packet up; hesitates; looks at her suspiciously; and throws it down again.

Napoleon. You seem to have forgotten your solicitude for the honour of your old friend.

Lady. I do not think she runs any risk now. She does not quite understand her husband.

Napoleon. I am to read the letter, then? (*He stretches out his hand as if to take up the packet again, with his eye on her.*)

Lady. I do not see how you can very well avoid doing so now. (*He instantly withdraws his hand.*) Oh, don't be afraid. You will find many interesting things in it.

Napoleon. For instance?

Lady. For instance, a duel with Barras, a domestic scene, a broken household, a public scandal, a checked career, all sorts of things.

Napoleon. Hm! (*He looks at her; takes up the packet and looks at it, pursing his lips and balancing it in his hands; looks at her again; passes the packet into his left hand and puts it behind his back, raising his right to scratch the back of his head as he turns and goes up to the edge of the vineyard, where he stands for a moment look-*

ing out into the vines, deep in thought. *The LADY watches him in silence, somewhat slightlying. Suddenly he turns and comes back again, full of force and decision.*) I grant your request, madam. Your courage and resolution deserve to succeed. Take the letters for which you have fought so well; and remember henceforth that you found the vile vulgar Corsican adventurer as generous to the vanquished after the battle as he was resolute in the face of the enemy before it. (*He offers her the packet.*)

Lady (without taking it, looking hard at him). What are you at now, I wonder? (*He dashes the packet furiously to the floor.*) Aha! I've spoilt that attitude, I think. (*She makes him a pretty mocking curtsey.*)

Napoleon (snatching it up again). Will you take the letters and begone (advancing and thrusting them upon her)?

Lady (escaping around the table). No: I don't want your letters.

Napoleon. Ten minutes ago, nothing else would satisfy you.

Lady (keeping the table carefully between them). Ten minutes ago you had not insulted me beyond all bearing.

Napoleon. I—(swallowing his spleen) I apologize.

Lady (coolly). Thanks. (*With forced politeness he offers her the packet across the table. She retreats a step out of its reach and says*) But don't you want to know whether the Austrians are at Mantua or Peschiera?

Napoleon. I have already told you that I can conquer my enemies without the aid of spies, madam.

Lady. And the letter? don't you want to read that?

Napoleon. You have said that it is not addressed to me. I am not in the habit of reading other people's letters. (*He again offers the packet.*)

Lady. In that case there can be no objection to your keeping it. All I wanted was to prevent your reading it. (*Cheerfully*) Good afternoon, General. (*She turns coolly towards the inner door.*)

Napoleon (angrily flinging the packet on the couch). Heaven grant me patience! (*He goes determinedly to the door, and places himself before it.*) Have you any sense of personal danger? Or are you one of those women who like to be beaten black and blue?

Lady. Thank you, General: I have no doubt the sensation is very voluptuous; but I had rather not. I simply want to go home: that's all. I was wicked enough to steal your despatches; but you have got them back; and you have forgiven me, because (*delicately reproducing his rhetorical cadence*) you are as generous to the vanquished after

the battle as you are resolute in the face of the enemy before it.

Won't you say good-bye to me? (*She offers her hand sweetly.*)

Napoleon (repulsing the advance with a gesture of concentrated rage, and opening the door to call fiercely). Giuseppe! (Louder) Giuseppe! (He bangs the door to, and comes to the middle of the room. The LADY goes a little way into the vineyard to avoid him.)

Giuseppe (appearing at the door). Excellency?

Napoleon. Where is that fool?

Giuseppe. He has had a good dinner, according to your instructions, excellency, and is now doing me the honour to gamble with me to pass the time.

Napoleon. Send him here. Bring him here. Come with him. (GIUSEPPE, with unruffled readiness, hurries off. NAPOLEON turns curtly to the LADY, saying) I must trouble you to remain some moments longer, madam. (He comes to the couch.)

She comes from the vineyard along the opposite side of the room to the sideboard, and posts herself there, leaning against it, watching him. He takes the packet from the couch and deliberately buttons it carefully into his breast pocket, looking at her meanwhile with an expression which suggests that she will soon find out the meaning of his proceedings, and will not like it. Nothing more is said until the LIEUTENANT arrives followed by GIUSEPPE, who stands modestly in attendance at the table. The LIEUTENANT, without cap, sword, or gloves, and much improved in temper and spirits by his meal, chooses the LADY'S side of the room, and waits, much at his ease, for NAPOLEON to begin.

Napoleon. Lieutenant.

Lieutenant (encouragingly). General.

Napoleon. I cannot persuade this lady to give me much information; but there can be no doubt that the man who tricked you out of your charge was, as she admitted to you, her brother.

Lieutenant (triumphantly). What did I tell you, General! What did I tell you!

Napoleon. You must find that man. Your honour is at stake; and the fate of the campaign, the destiny of France, of Europe, of humanity, perhaps, may depend on the information those despatches contain.

*Lieutenant. Yes, I suppose they really are rather serious (*as if this had hardly occurred to him before*).*

Napoleon (energetically). They are so serious, sir, that if you do not re-

cover them, you will be degraded in the presence of your regiment.

Lieutenant. Whew! The regiment won't like that, I can tell you.

Napoleon. Personally I am sorry for you. I would willingly hush up the affair if it were possible. But I shall be called to account for not acting on the despatches. I shall have to prove to all the world that I never received them, no matter what the consequences may be to you. I am sorry; but you see that I cannot help myself.

Lieutenant (good-naturedly). Oh, don't take it to heart, General: it's really very good of you. Never mind what happens to me: I shall scrape through somehow; and we'll beat the Austrians for you, despatches or no despatches. I hope you won't insist on my starting off on a wild goose chase after the fellow now. I haven't a notion where to look for him.

Giuseppe (deferentially). You forget, Lieutenant: he has your horse.

Lieutenant (starting). I forgot that. (*Resolutely*) I'll go after him, General: I'll find that horse if it's alive anywhere in Italy. And I shan't forget the despatches: never fear. *Giuseppe:* go and saddle one of those mangy old post-horses of yours while I get my cap and sword and things. Quick march. Off with you (*bustling him*).

Giuseppe. Instantly, Lieutenant, instantly. (*He disappears in the vineyard, where the light is now reddening with the sunset.*)

Lieutenant (looking about him on his way to the inner door). By the way, General, did I give you my sword or did I not? Oh, I remember now. (*Fretfully*) It's all that nonsense about putting a man under arrest: one never knows where to find—(*he talks himself out of the room*).

Lady (still at the sideboard). What does all this mean, General?

Napoleon. He will not find your brother.

Lady. Of course not. There's no such person.

Napoleon. The despatches will be irrecoverably lost.

Lady. Nonsense! They are inside your coat.

Napoleon. You will find it hard, I think, to prove that wild statement. (*The LADY starts. He adds, with clinching emphasis*) Those papers are lost.

Lady (anxiously, advancing to the corner of the table). And that unfortunate young man's career will be sacrificed?

Napoleon. His career! The fellow is not worth the gunpowder it would cost to have him shot. (*He turns contemptuously and goes to the hearth, where he stands with his back to her.*)

Lady (wistfully). You are very hard. Men and women are nothing to you but things to be used, even if they are broken in the use.

Napoleon (turning on her). Which of us has broken this fellow? I or you? Who tricked him out of the despatches? Did you think of his career then?

Lady (conscience-stricken). Oh, I never thought of that. It was wicked of me; but I couldn't help it, could I? How else could I have got the papers? *(Supplicating)* General: you will save him from disgrace.

Napoleon (laughing sourly). Save him yourself, since you are so clever: it was you who ruined him. *(With savage intensity)* I hate a bad soldier.

He goes out determinedly through the vineyard. She follows him a few steps with an appealing gesture, but is interrupted by the return of the LIEUTENANT, gloved and capped, with his sword on, ready for the road. He is crossing to the outer door when she intercepts him.

Lady. Lieutenant.

Lieutenant (importantly). You mustn't delay me, you know. Duty, madam, duty.

Lady (imploringly). Oh, sir, what are you going to do to my poor brother?

Lieutenant. Are you very fond of him?

Lady. I should die if anything happened to him. You must spare him.

(The LIEUTENANT shakes his head gloomily.) Yes, yes: you must: you shall: he is not fit to die. Listen to me. If I tell you where to find him—if I undertake to place him in your hands a prisoner, to be delivered up by you to General Bonaparte—will you promise me on your honour as an officer and a gentleman not to fight with him or treat him unkindly in any way?

Lieutenant. But suppose he attacks me. He has my pistols.

Lady. He is too great a coward.

Lieutenant. I don't feel so sure about that. He's capable of anything.

Lady. If he attacks you, or resists you in any way, I release you from your promise.

Lieutenant. My promise! I didn't mean to promise. Look here: you're as bad as he is: you've taken an advantage of me through the better side of my nature. What about my horse?

Lady. It is part of the bargain that you are to have your horse and pistols back.

Lieutenant. Honour bright?

Lady. Honour bright. *(She offers her hand.)*

Lieutenant (taking it and holding it). All right: I'll be as gentle as a lamb with him. His sister's a very pretty woman. *(He attempts to kiss her.)*

Lady (*slipping away from him*). Oh, Lieutenant! You forget: your career is at stake—the destiny of Europe—of humanity.

Lieutenant. Oh, bother the destiny of humanity! (*Making for her*) Only a kiss.

Lady (*retreating round the table*). Not until you have regained your honour as an officer. Remember: you have not captured my brother yet.

Lieutenant (*seductively*). You'll tell me where he is, won't you?

Lady. I have only to send him a certain signal; and he will be here in quarter of an hour.

Lieutenant. He's not far off, then.

Lady. No: quite close. Wait here for him: when he gets my message he will come here at once and surrender himself to you. You understand?

Lieutenant (*intellectually overtaxed*). Well, it's a little complicated; but I daresay it will be all right.

Lady. And now, whilst you're waiting, don't you think you had better make terms with the General?

Lieutenant. Oh, look here: this is getting frightfully complicated. What terms?

Lady. Make him promise that if you catch my brother he will consider that you have cleared your character as a soldier. He will promise anything you ask on that condition.

Lieutenant. That's not a bad idea. Thank you: I think I'll try it.

Lady. Do. And mind, above all things, don't let him see how clever you are.

Lieutenant. I understand. He'd be jealous.

Lady. Don't tell him anything except that you are resolved to capture my brother or perish in the attempt. He won't believe you. Then you will produce my brother—

Lieutenant (*interrupting as he masters the plot*). And have the laugh at him! I say: what a jolly clever woman you are! (*Shouting*) Giuseppe!

Lady. Sh! Not a word to Giuseppe about me. (*She puts her finger on her lips. He does the same. They look at one another warningly. Then, with a ravishing smile, she changes the gesture into wafting him a kiss, and runs out through the inner door. Electrified, he bursts into a volley of chuckles.*)

GIUSEPPE comes back by the outer door.

Giuseppe. The horse is ready, Lieutenant.

Lieutenant. I'm not going just yet. Go and find the General and tell him I want to speak to him.

Giuseppé (shaking his head). That will never do, Lieutenant.

Lieutenant. Why not?

Giuseppé. In this wicked world a general may send for a lieutenant; but a lieutenant must not send for a general.

Lieutenant. Oh, you think he wouldn't like it. Well, perhaps you're right: one has to be awfully particular about that sort of thing now we're a republic.

NAPOLEON reappears, advancing from the vineyard, buttoning the breast of his coat, pale and full of gnawing thoughts.

Giuseppé (unconscious of NAPOLEON'S approach). Quite true, Lieutenant, quite true. You are all like innkeepers now in France: you have to be polite to everybody.

Napoleon (putting his hand on GIUSEPPE'S shoulder). And that destroys the whole value of politeness, eh?

Lieutenant. The very man I wanted! See here, General: suppose I catch that fellow for you!

Napoleon (with ironical gravity). You will not catch him, my friend.

Lieutenant. Aha! you think so; but you'll see. Just wait. Only, if I do catch him and hand him over to you, will you cry quits? Will you drop all this about degrading me in the presence of my regiment? Not that *I* mind, you know; but still no regiment likes to have all the other regiments laughing at it.

Napoleon (a cold ray of humour striking pallidly across his gloom). What shall we do with this officer, Giuseppé? Everything he says is wrong.

Giuseppé (promptly). Make him a general, excellency; and then everything he says will be right.

Lieutenant (crowing). Haw-aw! (*He throws himself ecstatically on the couch to enjoy the joke.*)

Napoleon (laughing and pinching GIUSEPPE'S ear). You are thrown away in this inn, Giuseppé. (*He sits down and places GIUSEPPE before him like a schoolmaster with a pupil.*) Shall I take you away with me and make a man of you?

Giuseppé (shaking his head rapidly and repeatedly). No no no no no no no. All my life long people have wanted to make a man of me. When I was a boy, our good priest wanted to make a man of me by teaching me to read and write. Then the organist at Melegnano wanted to make a man of me by teaching me to read music. The

recruiting sergeant would have made a man of me if I had been a few inches taller. But it always meant making me work; and I am too lazy for that, thank Heaven! So I taught myself to cook and became an innkeeper; and now I keep servants to do the work, and have nothing to do myself except talk, which suits me perfectly.

Napoleon (looking at him thoughtfully). You are satisfied?

Giuseppe (with cheerful conviction). Quite, excellency.

Napoleon. And you have no devouring devil inside you who must be fed with action and victory: gorged with them night and day: who makes you pay, with the sweat of your brain and body, weeks of Herculean toil for ten minutes of enjoyment: who is at once your slave and your tyrant, your genius and your doom: who brings you a crown in one hand and the oar of a galley slave in the other: who shows you all the kingdoms of the earth and offers to make you their master on condition that you become their servant! have you nothing of that in you?

Giuseppe. Nothing of it! Oh, I assure you, excellency, my devouring devil is far worse than that. He offers me no crowns and kingdoms: he expects to get everything for nothing: sausages! omelettes! grapes! cheese! polenta! wine! three times a day, excellency: nothing less will content him.

Lieutenant. Come: drop it, Giuseppe: you're making me feel hungry again.

GIUSEPPE, *with an apologetic shrug, retires from the conversation.*

Napoleon (turning to the LIEUTENANT with sardonic politeness). I hope I have not been making you feel ambitious.

Lieutenant. Not at all: I don't fly so high. Besides, I'm better as I am: men like me are wanted in the army just now. The fact is, the Revolution was all very well for civilians; but it won't work in the army. You know what soldiers are, General: they will have men of family for their officers. A subaltern must be a gentleman, because he's so much in contact with the men. But a general, or even a colonel, may be any sort of riff-raff if he understands his job well enough. A lieutenant is a gentleman: all the rest is chance. Why, who do you suppose won the Battle of Lodi? I'll tell you. My horse did.

Napoleon (rising). Your folly is carrying you too far, sir. Take care.

Lieutenant. Not a bit of it. You remember all that red-hot cannonade across the river: the Austrians blazing away at you to keep you from crossing, and you blazing away at them to keep them from

setting the bridge on fire? Did you notice where I was then?
Napoleon. I am sorry. I am afraid I was rather occupied at the moment.

Giuseppe (*with eager admiration*). They say you jumped off your horse and worked the big guns with your own hands, General.

Lieutenant. That was a mistake: an officer should never let himself down to the level of his men. (*NAPOLEON looks at him dangerously, and begins to walk tigerishly to and fro.*) But you might have been firing away at the Austrians still if we cavalry fellows hadn't found the ford and got across and turned old Beaulieu's flank for you. You know you didn't dare give the order to charge the bridge until you saw us on the other side. Consequently, I say that whoever found that ford won the Battle of Lodi. Well, who found it? I was the first man to cross; and I know. It was my horse that found it. (*With conviction, as he rises from the couch*) That horse is the true conqueror of the Austrians.

Napoleon (*passionately*). You idiot: I'll have you shot for losing those despatches: I'll have you blown from the mouth of a cannon: nothing less could make any impression on you. (*Baying at him*) Do you hear? Do you understand?

A French officer enters unobserved, carrying his sheathed sabre in his hand.

Lieutenant (*unabashed*). If I don't capture him, General. Remember the if.

Napoleon. If!! Ass: there is no such man.

The Officer (*suddenly stepping between them and speaking in the unmistakable voice of the STRANGE LADY*). Lieutenant: I am your prisoner. (*She offers him her sabre.*)

NAPOLEON gazes at her for a moment thunderstruck; then seizes her by the wrist and drags her roughly to him, looking closely and fiercely at her to satisfy himself as to her identity; for it now begins to darken rapidly into night, the red glow over the vineyard giving way to clear starlight.

Napoleon. Pah! (*He flings her hand away with an exclamation of disgust, and turns his back on them with his hand in his breast, his brow lowering, and his toes twitching.*)

Lieutenant (*triumphantly, taking the sabre*). No such man! eh, General? (*To the LADY*) I say: where's my horse?

Lady. Safe at Borghetto, waiting for you, Lieutenant.

Napoleon (*turning on them*). Where are the despatches?

Lady. You would never guess. They are in the most unlikely place in the world. Did you meet my sister here, any of you?

Lieutenant. Yes. Very nice woman. She's wonderfully like you; but of course she's better looking.

Lady (mysteriously). Well, do you know that she is a witch?

Giuseppe (in terror, crossing himself). Oh, no, no, no. It is not safe to jest about such things. I cannot have it in my house, excellency.

Lieutenant. Yes, drop it. You're my prisoner, you know. Of course I don't believe in any such rubbish; but still it's not a proper subject for joking.

Lady. But this is very serious. My sister has bewitched the General. (*GIUSEPPE and the LIEUTENANT recoil from NAPOLEON.*) General: open your coat: you will find the despatches in the breast of it. (*She puts her hand quickly on his breast.*) Yes: there they are: I can feel them. Eh? (*She looks up into his face half coaxingly, half mockingly.*) Will you allow me, General? (*She takes a button as if to unbutton his coat, and pauses for permission.*)

Napoleon (inscrutably). If you dare.

Lady. Thank you. (*She opens his coat and takes out the despatches.*) There! (*To GIUSEPPE, showing him the despatches*) See!

Giuseppe (flying to the outer door). No, in heaven's name! They're bewitched.

Lady (turning to the LIEUTENANT). Here, Lieutenant: you are not afraid of them.

Lieutenant (retreating). Keep off. (*Seizing the hilt of the sabre*) Keep off, I tell you.

Lady (to NAPOLEON). They belong to you, General. Take them.

Giuseppe. Don't touch them, excellency. Have nothing to do with them.

Lieutenant. Be careful, General: be careful.

Giuseppe. Burn them. And burn the witch too.

Lady (to NAPOLEON). Shall I burn them?

Napoleon (thoughtfully). Yes, burn them. Giuseppe: go and fetch a light.

Giuseppe (trembling and stammering). Do you mean go alone? in the dark? with a witch in the house?

Napoleon. Psha! You're a poltroon. (*To the LIEUTENANT*) Oblige me by going, Lieutenant.

Lieutenant (remonstrating). Oh, I say, General! No, look here, you know: nobody can say I'm a coward after Lodi. But to ask me to go into the dark by myself without a candle after such an awful conversation is a little too much. How would you like to do it yourself?

Napoleon (irritably). You refuse to obey my order?

Lieutenant (resolutely). Yes I do. It's not reasonable. But I'll tell you what I'll do. If Giuseppe goes, I'll go with him and protect him.

Napoleon (to GIUSEPPE). There! will that satisfy you? Be off, both of you.

Giuseppe (humbly, his lips trembling). W-willingly, your excellency. (*He goes reluctantly towards the inner door.*) Heaven protect me! (*To the LIEUTENANT*) After you, Lieutenant.

Lieutenant. You'd better go first: I don't know the way.

Giuseppe. You can't miss it. Besides (*imploringly, laying his hand on his sleeve*) I am only a poor innkeeper: you are a man of family.

Lieutenant. There's something in that. Here: you needn't be in such a fright. Take my arm. (*GIUSEPPE does so.*) That's the way. (*They go out, arm in arm.*)

It is now starry night. The LADY throws the packet on the table and seats herself at her ease on the couch, enjoying the sensation of freedom from petticoats.

Lady. Well, General: I've beaten you.

Napoleon (walking about). You are guilty of indelicacy: of unwomanliness.

Is that costume proper?

Lady. It seems to me much the same as yours.

Napoleon. Psha! I blush for you.

Lady (naïvely). Yes: soldiers blush so easily. (*He growls and turns away. She looks mischievously at him, balancing the despatches in her hand.*) Wouldn't you like to read these before they're burnt, General? You must be dying with curiosity. Take a peep. (*She throws the packet on the table, and turns her face away from it.*) I won't look.

Napoleon. I have no curiosity whatever, madam. But since you are evidently burning to read them, I give you leave to do so.

Lady. Oh, I've read them already.

Napoleon (starting). What!

Lady. I read them the first thing after I rode away on that poor lieutenant's horse. So you see I know what's in them; and you don't.

Napoleon. Excuse me: I read them when I was out there in the vineyard ten minutes ago.

Lady. Oh! (*Jumping up*) Oh, General: I've not beaten you after all. I do admire you so. (*He laughs and pats her cheek.*) This time, really and truly without shamming, I do you homage (*kissing his hand*).

Napoleon (quickly withdrawing it). Brr! Don't do that. No more witchcraft.

Lady. I want to say something to you; only you would misunderstand it.
Napoleon. Need that stop you?

Lady. Well, it is this. I adore a man who is not afraid to be mean and selfish.

Napoleon (*indignantly*). I am neither mean nor selfish.

Lady. Oh, you don't appreciate yourself. Besides, I don't really mean meanness and selfishness.

Napoleon. Thank you. I thought perhaps you did.

Lady. Well, of course I do. But what I mean is a certain strong simplicity about you.

Napoleon. That's better.

Lady. You didn't want to read the letters; but you were curious about what was in them. So you went into the garden and read them when no one was looking, and then came back and pretended you hadn't. That's the meanest thing I ever knew any man do; but it exactly fulfilled your purpose; and so you weren't a bit afraid or ashamed to do it.

Napoleon (*abruptly*). Where did you pick up all these vulgar scruples? this (*with contemptuous emphasis*) conscience of yours? I took you for a lady: an aristocrat. Was your grandfather a shopkeeper, pray?

Lady. No: he was an Englishman.

Napoleon. That accounts for it. The English are a nation of shopkeepers. Now I understand why you've beaten me.

Lady. Oh, I haven't beaten you. And I'm not English.

Napoleon. Yes you are: English to the backbone. Listen to me: I will explain the English to you.

Lady (*eagerly*). Do. (*With a lively air of anticipating an intellectual treat, she sits down on the couch and composes herself to listen to him. Secure of his audience, he at once nerves himself for a performance. He considers a little before he begins; so as to fix her attention by a moment of suspense. His style is at first modelled on Talma's in Corneille's Cinna; but it is somewhat lost in the darkness, and Talma presently gives way to NAPOLEON, the voice coming through the gloom with startling intensity.*)

Napoleon. There are three sorts of people in the world: the low people, the middle people, and the high people. The low people and the high people are alike in one thing: they have no scruples, no morality. The low are beneath morality, the high above it. I am not afraid of either of them; for the low are unscrupulous without knowledge, so that they make an idol of me; whilst the high are unscrupulous with-

out purpose, so that they go down before my will. Look you: I shall go over all the mobs and all the courts of Europe as a plough goes over a field. It is the middle people who are dangerous: they have both knowledge and purpose. But they, too, have their weak point. They are full of scruples: chained hand and foot by their morality and respectability.

Lady. Then you will beat the English; for all shopkeepers are middle people.

Napoleon. No, because the English are a race apart. No Englishman is too low to have scruples: no Englishman is high enough to be free from their tyranny. But every Englishman is born with a certain miraculous power that makes him master of the world. When he wants a thing, he never tells himself that he wants it. He waits patiently until there comes into his mind, no one knows how, a burning conviction that it is his moral and religious duty to conquer those who possess the thing he wants. Then he becomes irresistible. Like the aristocrat, he does what pleases him and grabs what he covets: like the shopkeeper, he pursues his purpose with the industry and steadfastness that come from strong religious conviction and deep sense of moral responsibility. He is never at a loss for an effective moral attitude. As the great champion of freedom and national independence, he conquers and annexes half the world, and calls it Colonization. When he wants a new market for his adulterated Manchester goods, he sends a missionary to teach the natives the Gospel of Peace. The natives kill the missionary: he flies to arms in defence of Christianity; fights for it; conquers for it; and takes the market as a reward from heaven. In defence of his island shores, he puts a chaplain on board his ship; nails a flag with a cross on it to his topgallant mast; and sails to the end of the earth, sinking, burning, and destroying all who dispute the empire of the seas with him. He boasts that a slave is free the moment his foot touches British soil; and he sells the children of his poor at six years of age to work under the lash in his factories for sixteen hours a day. He makes two revolutions, and then declares war on our one in the name of law and order. There is nothing so bad or so good that you will not find Englishmen doing it; but you will never find an Englishman in the wrong. He does everything on principle. He fights you on patriotic principles; he robs you on business principles; he enslaves you on imperial principles; he bullies you on manly principles; he supports his king on loyal principles and cuts off his king's head on republican principles. His watchword is always

Duty; and he never forgets that the nation which lets its duty get on the opposite side to its interest is lost. He—

Lady. W-w-w-w-w-wh! Do stop a moment. I want to know how you make me out to be English at this rate.

Napoleon (*dropping his rhetorical style*). It's plain enough. You wanted some letters that belonged to me. You have spent the morning in stealing them: yes, stealing them, by highway robbery. And you have spent the afternoon in putting me in the wrong about them: in assuming that it was *I* who wanted to steal your letters: in explaining that it all came about through my meanness and selfishness, and your goodness, your devotion, your self-sacrifice. That's English.

Lady. Nonsense! I am sure I am not a bit English. The English are a very stupid people.

Napoleon. Yes, too stupid sometimes to know when they're beaten. But I grant that your brains are not English. You see, though your grandfather was an Englishman, your grandmother was—what? A Frenchwoman?

Lady. Oh no. An Irishwoman.

Napoleon (*quickly*). Irish! (*Thoughtfully*) Yes: I forgot the Irish. An English army led by an Irish general: that might be a match for a French army led by an Italian general. (*He pauses, and adds, half jestingly, half moodily*) At all events, you have beaten me; and what beats a man first will beat him last. (*He goes meditatively into the moonlit vineyard and looks up.*)

She steals out after him. She ventures to rest her hand on his shoulder, overcome by the beauty of the night and emboldened by its obscurity.

Lady (*softly*). What are you looking at?

Napoleon (*pointing up*). My star.

Lady. You believe in that?

Napoleon. I do.

They look at it for a moment, she leaning a little on his shoulder.

Lady. Do you know that the English say that a man's star is not complete without a woman's garter?

Napoleon (*scandalized: abruptly shaking her off and coming back into the room*). Pah! The hypocrites! If the French said that, how they would hold up their hands in pious horror! (*He goes to the inner door and holds it open, shouting*) Hallo! Giuseppe! Where's that light, man? (*He comes between the table and the sideboard, and moves*

the second chair to the table, beside his own.) We have still to burn the letter. (He takes up the packet.)

GIUSEPPE comes back, pale and still trembling, carrying in one hand a branched candlestick with a couple of candles alight, and a broad snuffers tray in the other.

Giuseppe (piteously, as he places the light on the table). Excellency: what were you looking up at just now? Out there! (He points across his shoulder to the vineyard, but is afraid to look round.)

Napoleon (unfolding the packet). What is that to you?

Giuseppe. Because the witch is gone: vanished; and no one saw her go out.

Lady (coming behind him from the vineyard). We were watching her riding up to the moon on your broomstick, Giuseppe. You will never see her again.

Giuseppe. Gesu Maria! (He crosses himself and hurries out.)

Napoleon (throwing down the letters in a heap on the table). Now! (He sits down at the table in the chair which he has just placed.)

Lady. Yes; but you know you have THE letter in your pocket. (He smiles; takes a letter from his pocket; and tosses it on top of the heap. She holds it up and looks at him, saying) About Caesar's wife.

Napoleon. Caesar's wife is above suspicion. Burn it.

Lady (taking up the snuffers and holding the letter to the candle flame with them). I wonder would Caesar's wife be above suspicion if she saw us here together!

Napoleon (echoing her, with his elbows on the table and his cheeks on his hands, looking at the letter). I wonder!

The STRANGE LADY puts the letter down alight on the snuffers tray, and sits down beside NAPOLEON, in the same attitude, elbows on table, cheeks on hands, watching it burn. When it is burnt, they simultaneously turn their eyes and look at one another. The curtain steals down and hides them.

John M. Synge

1871–1909

John Millington Synge was born near Dublin, on April 16, 1871. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and went to Germany, where he studied music. Later he settled in Paris with the young writers there and eked out a living writing literary criticism.

The turning point in Synge's life came when he met a fellow Irishman, William Butler Yeats, in Paris. Yeats took an interest in the young man, and became convinced that he would be a better writer if he gave up imitating the Paris literary fashions and became a truly Irish author. Yeats persuaded Synge, in 1893, to leave Paris and go to the Aran Islands to live the simple life of the Irish peasants there. This he did, soaking up the sound of the islanders' speech and the substance of their legends.

Yeats describes the young writer: "He was a solitary, undemonstrative man, never asking pity, nor complaining, nor seeking sympathy . . . all folded up in brooding intellect, knowing nothing of new books and newspapers, reading the great masters alone."

Synge's sketches about the islanders were collected in *The Aran Islands* (1907). He spent the rest of his short life writing the plays of Irish peasant life for which he has become famous. His first two, *The Shadow of the Glen* (1903) and *Riders to the Sea* (1904), were produced by the Irish National Theatre Society. This group organized the famous Abbey Theatre in 1904. Synge, Yeats, and Lady Gregory were the directors. When Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* was presented there, the audience rioted in anger at what they understood to be Synge's criticism of Ireland. The play later helped make the Abbey Theatre world renowned.

Synge's poetry was collected in *Poems and Translations* (1909),

and he had nearly completed his last play, *Deirdre of the Sorrows*, when he died in Dublin on March 24, 1909.

Yeats wrote that Synge, like Shakespeare and other great playwrights, had a delight in language and a preoccupation with individual life. Another way of putting it is that Synge's plays are, at the same time, poetic and realistic. These traits were the ones most highly valued in the Irish dramatic renaissance that was inspired and promoted by Yeats and the Irish Literary Theatre. Other Irish writers, including Yeats himself, had one or the other characteristic to a high degree. Synge mastered and mingled the two.

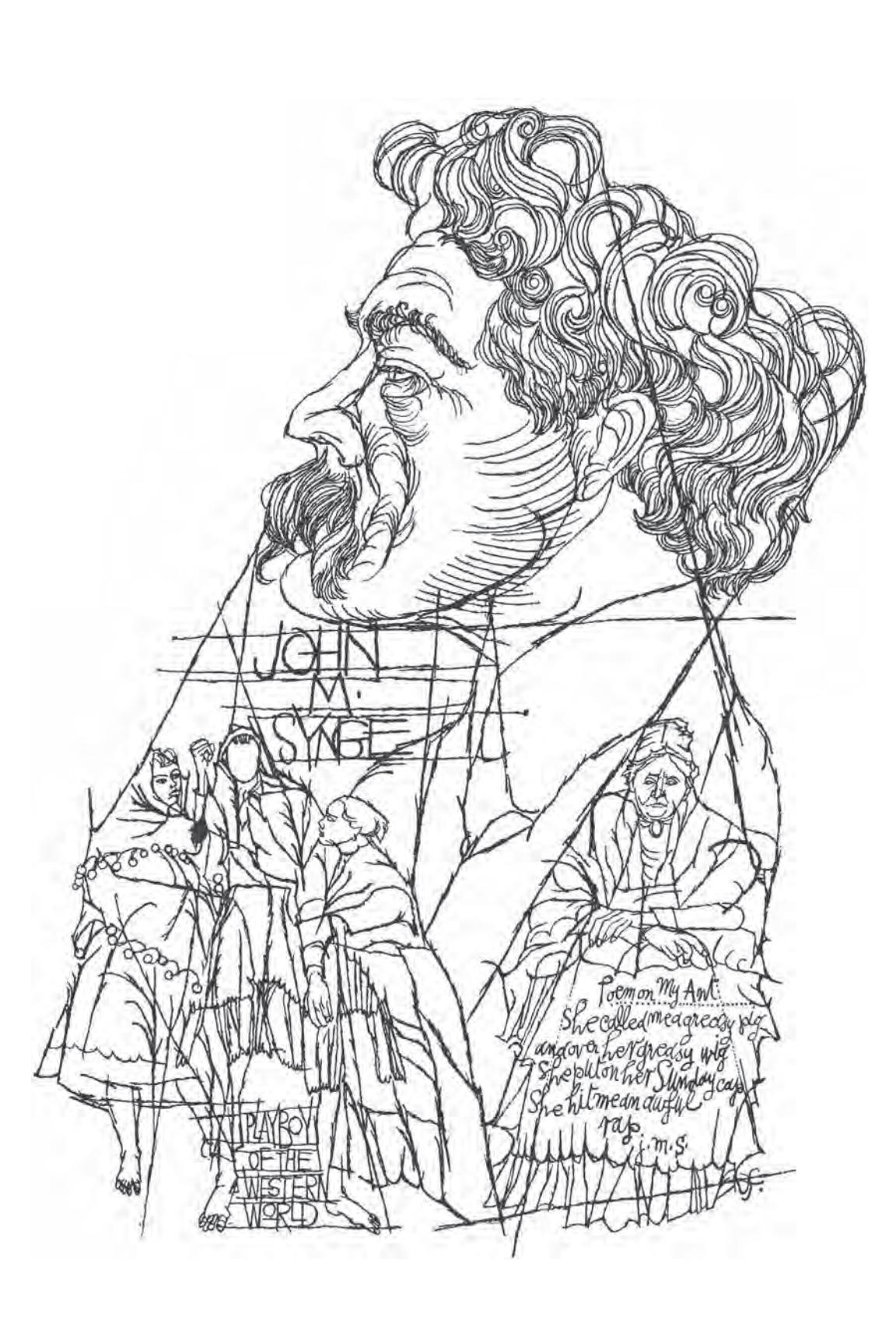
Synge was a painstaking observer and listener. Not an inflection of Irish peasant speech nor a habit of body or thought escaped his notice. He did not judge his people nor fight for their causes. Rather, he accepted and understood them with compassion and respect.

The Irish playwright was no mere reporter, however. He was a poet, with a poet's ear for the music of speech and a poet's grasp of symbolic meanings. He criticized Ibsen, whose realism he respected, for writing "in joyless and pallid words." The rhythm of Synge's beautiful Irish dialogue stays with us long after we have read his plays. Yeats said of Synge's language: "It makes the people of his imagination disembodied; it gives them a kind of innocence even in their anger and cursing."

Riders to the Sea shows Synge at his best. His perfect little oneact play is a moving tribute to the power of humanity to endure even the greatest hardships. When Maurya mourns for her six fine sons, the lament is also for all beauty and strength that must die.

After her last son has ridden away on the gray pony, death, to the sea's oblivion, after her "crying and keening" are done, the old woman speaks in her wisdom to the young people who cannot understand their misfortune: "What more can we want than that? No man at all can be living for ever, and we must be satisfied."

Notes from the artist: ". . . a scene from The Playboy of the Western World is shown at the left below the profile of Synge, while on the right is a facsimile of a poem written by Synge to his Aunt Jane when he was nine years old."



JOHN
M.
SYKES

PLAYBOY
OF THE
WESTERN
WORLD

Poem on My Aunt
She called me a greasy pig
and gave her greasy wig
She put on her Sunday cap
She hit me an awful
rap. j.m.s.

Riders to the Sea

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MAURYA, *an old woman*
BARTLEY, *her son*
CATHLEEN, *her daughter*
NORA, *a younger daughter*
MEN and WOMEN

SCENE. *An island of the west of Ireland.*

C

cottage kitchen, with nets, oilskins, spinning-wheel, some new boards standing by the wall, etc. CATHLEEN, a girl of about twenty, finishes kneading cake, and puts it down in the pot-oven by the fire; then wipes her hands, and begins to spin at the wheel. NORA, a young girl, puts her head in at the door.

Nora (in a low voice). Where is she?

Cathleen. She's lying down, God help her, and may be sleeping, if she's able.

NORA comes in softly, and takes a bundle from under her shawl.

Cathleen (spinning the wheel rapidly). What is it you have?

Nora. The young priest is after bringing them. It's a shirt and a plain stocking we're got off a drowned man in Donegal.

CATHLEEN stops her wheel with a sudden movement, and leans out to listen.

Nora. We're to find out if it's Michael's they are, some time herself will be down looking by the sea.

Cathleen. How would they be Michael's, Nora? How would he go the length of that way to the far north?

Nora. The young priest says he's known the like of it. "If it's Michael's they are," says he, "you can tell herself he's got a clean burial by the grace of God, and if they're not his, let no one say a word about them, for she'll be getting her death," says he, "with crying and lamenting."

The door which NORA half closed is blown open by a gust of wind.

Cathleen (looking out anxiously). Did you ask him would he stop Bartley going this day with the horses to the Galway fair?

Nora. "I won't stop him," says he, "but let you not be afraid. Herself does be saying prayers half through the night, and the Almighty God won't leave her destitute," says he, "with no son living."

Cathleen. Is the sea bad by the white rocks, Nora?

Nora. Middling bad, God help us. There's a great roaring in the west, and it's worse it'll be getting when the tide's turned to the wind.

She goes over to the table with the bundle.

Shall I open it now?

Cathleen. Maybe she'd wake up on us, and come in before we'd done. (*Coming to the table.*) It's a long time we'll be, and the two of us crying.

Nora (goes to the inner door and listens). She's moving about on the bed. She'll be coming in a minute.

Cathleen. Give me the ladder, and I'll put them up in the turf-loft, the way she won't know of them at all, and maybe when the tide turns she'll be going down to see would he be floating from the east.

They put the ladder against the gable of the chimney; CATHLEEN goes up a few steps and hides the bundle in the turf-loft. MAURYA comes from the inner room.

Maurya (looking up at CATHLEEN and speaking querulously). Isn't it turf enough you have for this day and evening?

Cathleen. There's a cake baking at the fire for a short space (*throwing down the turf*) and Bartley will want it when the tide turns if he goes to Connemara.

NORA picks up the turf and puts it round the pot-oven.

Maurya (sitting down on a stool at the fire). He won't go this day with the wind rising from the south and west. He won't go this day, for the young priest will stop him surely.

Nora. He'll not stop him, mother, and I heard Eamon Simon and Stephen Pheety and Colum Shawn saying he would go.

Maurya. Where is he itself?

Nora. He went down to see would there be another boat sailing in the week, and I'm thinking it won't be long till he's here now, for the tide's turning at the green head, and the hooker's tacking from the east.

Cathleen. I hear some one passing the big stones.

Nora (looking out). He's coming now, and he in a hurry.

Bartley (comes in and looks round the room. Speaking sadly and quietly). Where is the bit of new rope, Cathleen, was bought in Connemara?

Cathleen (coming down). Give it to him, Nora; it's on a nail by the white boards. I hung it up this morning, for the pig with the black feet was eating it.

Nora (giving him a rope). Is that it, Bartley?

Maurya. You'd do right to leave that rope, Bartley, hanging by the boards.

(BARTLEY takes the rope.) It will be wanting in this place, I'm telling you, if Michael is washed up to-morrow morning, or the next morning, or any morning in the week, for it's a deep grave we'll make him by the grace of God.

Bartley (beginning to work with the rope). I've no halter the way I can ride down on the mare, and I must go now quickly. This is the one boat going for two weeks or beyond it, and the fair will be a good fair for horses I heard them saying below.

Maurya. It's a hard thing they'll be saying below if the body is washed up and there's no man in it to make the coffin, and I after giving a big price for the finest white boards you'd find in Connemara.

She looks round at the boards.

Bartley. How would it be washed up, and we after looking each day for nine days, and a strong wind blowing a while back from the west and south?

Maurya. If it wasn't found itself, that wind is raising the sea, and there was a star up against the moon, and it rising in the night. If it was a hundred horses, or a thousand horses you had itself, what is the price of a thousand horses against a son where there is one son only?

Bartley (working at the halter, to CATHLEEN). Let you go down each

day, and see the sheep aren't jumping in on the rye, and if the jobber comes you can sell the pig with the black feet if there is a good price going.

Maurya. How would the like of her get a good price for a pig?

Bartley (to CATHLEEN). If the west wind holds with the last bit of the moon let you and Nora get up weed enough for another cock for the kelp. It's hard set we'll be from this day with no one in it but one man to work.

Maurya. It's hard set we'll be surely the day you're drownd'd with the rest. What way will I live and the girls with me, and I an old woman looking for the grave?

BARTLEY lays down the halter, takes off his old coat, and puts on a newer one of the same flannel.

Bartley (to NORA). Is she coming to the pier?

Nora (looking out). She's passing the green head and letting fall her sails.

Bartley (getting his purse and tobacco). I'll have half an hour to go down, and you'll see me coming again in two days, or in three days, or maybe in four days if the wind is bad.

Maurya (turning round to the fire, and putting her shawl over her head). Isn't it a hard and cruel man won't hear a word from an old woman, and she holding him from the sea?

Cathleen. It's the life of a young man to be going on the sea, and who would listen to an old woman with one thing and she saying it over?

Bartley (taking the halter). I must go now quickly. I'll ride down on the red mare, and the gray pony 'll run behind me. . . . The blessing of God on you.

He goes out.

Maurya (crying out as he is in the door). He's gone now, God spare us, and we'll not see him again. He's gone now, and when the black night is falling I'll have no son left me in the world.

Cathleen. Why wouldn't you give him your blessing and he looking round in the door? Isn't it sorrow enough is on every one in this house without your sending him out with an unlucky word behind him, and a hard word in his ear?

MAURYA takes up the tongs and begins raking the fire aimlessly without looking round.

Nora (turning towards her). You're taking away the turf from the cake.

Cathleen (crying out). The Son of God forgive us, Nora, we're after forgetting his bit of bread.

She comes over to the fire.

Nora. And it's destroyed he'll be going till dark night, and he after eating nothing since the sun went up.

Cathleen (turning the cake out of the oven). It's destroyed he'll be, surely. There's no sense left on any person in a house where an old woman will be talking for ever.

MAURYA sways herself on her stool.

Cathleen (cutting off some of the bread and rolling it in a cloth; to MAURYA). Let you go down now to the spring well and give him this and he passing. You'll see him then and the dark word will be broken, and you can say "God speed you," the way he'll be easy in his mind.

Maurya (taking the bread). Will I be in it as soon as himself?

Cathleen. If you go now quickly.

Maurya (standing up unsteadily). It's hard set I am to walk.

Cathleen (looking at her anxiously). Give her the stick, Nora, or maybe she'll slip on the big stones.

Nora. What stick?

Cathleen. The stick Michael brought from Connemara.

Maurya (taking a stick NORA gives her). In the big world the old people do be leaving things after them for their sons and children, but in this place it is the young men do be leaving things behind for them that do be old.

She goes out slowly. NORA goes over to the ladder.

Cathleen. Wait, Nora, maybe she'd turn back quickly. She's that sorry, God help her, you wouldn't know the thing she'd do.

Nora. Is she gone round by the bush?

Cathleen (looking out). She's gone now. Throw it down quickly, for the Lord knows when she'll be out of it again.

Nora (getting the bundle from the loft). The young priest said he'd be passing to-morrow, and we might go down and speak to him below if it's Michael's they are surely.

Cathleen (taking the bundle). Did he say what way they were found?

Nora (coming down). "There were two men," says he, "and they rowing round with poteen before the cocks crowed, and the oar of one of them caught the body, and they passing the black cliffs of the north."

Cathleen (trying to open the bundle). Give me a knife, Nora, the string's perished with the salt water, and there's a black knot on it you wouldn't loosen in a week.

Nora (giving her a knife). I've heard tell it was a long way to Donegal.

Cathleen (cutting the string). It is surely. There was a man in here a while ago—the man sold us that knife—and he said if you set off walking from the rocks beyond, it would be seven days you'd be in Donegal.

Nora. And what time would a man take, and he floating?

CATHLEEN opens the bundle and takes out a bit of a stocking. They look at them eagerly.

Cathleen (in a low voice). The Lord spare us, Nora! isn't it a queer hard thing to say if it's his they are surely?

Nora. I'll get his shirt off the hook the way we can put the one flannel on the other. (*She looks through some clothes hanging in the corner.*) It's not with them, Cathleen, and where will it be?

Cathleen. I'm thinking Bartley put it on him in the morning, for his own shirt was heavy with the salt in it (*pointing to the corner*). There's a bit of a sleeve was of the same stuff. Give me that and it will do.

NORA brings it to her and they compare the flannel.

Cathleen. It's the same stuff, Nora; but if it is itself aren't there great rolls of it in the shops of Galway, and isn't it many another man may have a shirt of it as well as Michael himself?

Nora (who has taken up the stocking and counted the stitches, crying out). It's Michael, Cathleen, it's Michael; God spare his soul, and what will herself say when she hears this story, and Bartley on the sea?

Cathleen (taking the stocking). It's a plain stocking.

Nora. It's the second one of the third pair I knitted, and I put up three score stitches, and I dropped four of them.

Cathleen (counts the stitches). It's that number is in it (*crying out*). Ah, Nora, isn't it a bitter thing to think of him floating that way to the far north, and no one to keen him but the black hags that do be flying on the sea?

Nora (swinging herself round, and throwing out her arms on the clothes). And isn't it a pitiful thing when there is nothing left of a man who was a great rower and fisher, but a bit of an old shirt and a plain stocking?

Cathleen (after an instant). Tell me is herself coming, Nora? I hear a little sound on the path.

Nora (looking out). She is, Cathleen. She's coming up to the door.

Cathleen. Put these things away before she'll come in. Maybe it's easier she'll be after giving her blessing to Hartley, and we won't let on we've heard anything the time he's on the sea.

Nora (helping CATHLEEN to close the bundle). We'll put them here in the corner.

They put them into a hole in the chimney corner. CATHLEEN goes back to the spinning-wheel.

Nora. Will she see it was crying I was?

Cathleen. Keep your back to the door the way the light'll not be on you.

NORA sits down at the chimney corner, with her back to the door. MAURYA comes in very slowly, without looking at the girls, and goes over to her stool at the other side of the fire. The cloth with the bread is still in her hand. The girls look at each other, and NORA points to the bundle of bread.

Cathleen (after spinning for a moment). You didn't give him his bit of bread?

MAURYA begins to keen softly, without turning round.

Cathleen. Did you see him riding down?

MAURYA goes on keening.

Cathleen (a little impatiently). God forgive you; isn't it a better thing to raise your voice and tell what you seen, than to be making lamentation for a thing that's done? Did you see Bartley, I'm saying to you.

Maurya (with a weak voice). My heart's broken from this day.

Cathleen (as before). Did you see Bartley?

Maurya. I seen the fearfulest thing.

Cathleen (leaves her wheel and looks out). God forgive you; he's riding the mare now over the green head, and the gray pony behind him.

Maurya (starts, so that her shawl falls back from her head and shows her white tossed hair. With a frightened voice). The gray pony behind him.

Cathleen (coming to the fire). What is it ails you, at all?

Maurya (speaking very slowly). I've seen the fearfulest thing any person

has seen, since the day Bride Dara seen the dead man with the child in his arms.

Cathleen and Nora. Uah.

They crouch down in front of the old woman at the fire.

Nora. Tell us what it is you seen.

Maurya. I went down to the spring well, and I stood there saying a prayer to myself. Then Bartley came along, and he riding on the red mare with the gray pony behind him. (*She puts up her hands, as if to hide something from her eyes.*) The Son of God spare us, Nora!

Cathleen. What is it you seen?

Maurya. I seen Michael himself.

Cathleen (speaking softly). You did not, mother; It wasn't Michael you seen, for his body is after being found in the far north, and he's got a clean burial by the grace of God.

Maurya (a little defiantly). I'm after seeing him this day, and he riding and galloping. Bartley came first on the red mare; and I tried to say "God speed you," but something choked the words in my throat. He went by quickly; and "the blessing of God on you," says he, and I could say nothing. I looked up then, and I crying, at the gray pony, and there was Michael upon it—with fine clothes on him, and new shoes on his feet.

Cathleen (begins to keen). It's destroyed we are from this day. It's destroyed, surely.

Nora. Didn't the young priest say the Almighty God wouldn't leave her destitute with no son living?

Maurya (in a low voice, but clearly). It's little the like of him knows of the sea. . . . Bartley will be lost now, and let you call in Eamon and make me a good coffin out of the white boards, for I won't live after them. I've had a husband, and a husband's father, and six sons in this house—six fine men, though it was a hard birth I had with every one of them and they coming to the world—and some of them were found and some of them were not found, but they're gone now the lot of them. . . . There were Stephen, and Shawn, were lost in the great wind, and found after in the Bay of Gregory of the Golden Mouth, and carried up the two of them on the one plank, and in by that door.

She pauses for a moment; the girls start as if they heard something through the door that is half open behind them.

Nora (in a whisper). Did you hear that, Cathleen? Did you hear a noise in the north-east?

Cathleen (in a whisper). There's some one after crying out by the seashore.

Maurya (continues without hearing anything). There was Sheamus and his father, and his own father again, were lost in a dark night, and not a stick or sign was seen of them when the sun went up. There was Patch after was drowned out of a curagh that turned over. I was sitting here with Bartley, and he a baby, lying on my two knees, and I seen two women, and three women, and four women coming in, and they crossing themselves, and not saying a word. I looked out then, and there were men coming after them, and they holding a thing in the half of a red sail, and water dripping out of it—it was a dry day, Nora—and leaving a track to the door.

She pauses again with her hand stretched out towards the door. It opens softly and old women begin to come in, crossing themselves on the threshold, and kneeling down in front of the stage with red petticoats over their heads.

Maurya (half in a dream, to CATHLEEN). Is it Patch, or Michael, or what is it at all?

Cathleen. Michael is after being found in the far north, and when he is found there how could he be here in this place?

Maurya. There does be a power of young men floating round in the sea, and what way would they know if it was Michael they had, or another man like him, for when a man is nine days in the sea, and the wind blowing, it's hard set his own mother would be to say what man was it.

Cathleen. It's Michael, God spare him, for they're after sending us a bit of his clothes from the far north.

She reaches out and hands MAURYA the clothes that belonged to MICHAEL. MAURYA stands up slowly and takes them in her hands. NORA looks out.

Nora. They're carrying a thing among them and there's water dripping out of it and leaving a track by the big stones.

Cathleen (in a whisper to the women who have come in). Is it Bartley it is? *One of the Women.* It is surely, God rest his soul.

Two younger women come in and pull out the table. Then men carry in the body of BARTLEY, laid on a plank, with a bit of a sail over it, and lay it on the table.

Cathleen (*to the women, as they are doing so*). What way was he drowned? One of the Women. The gray pony knocked him into the sea, and he was washed out where there is a great surf on the white rocks.

MAURYA has gone over and knelt down at the head of the table. The women are keening softly and swaying themselves with a slow movement. CATHLEEN and NORA kneel at the other end of the table. The men kneel near the door.

Maurya (raising her head and speaking as if she did not see the people around her).

They're all gone now, and there isn't anything more the sea can do to me. . . . I'll have no call now to be up crying and praying when the wind breaks from the south, and you can hear the surf is in the east, and the surf is in the west, making a great stir with the two noises, and they hitting one on the other. I'll have no call now to be going down and getting Holy Water in the dark nights after Samhain, and I won't care what way the sea is when the other women will be keening. (*To NORA.*) Give me the Holy Water, Nora, there's a small sup still on the dresser.

NORA gives it to her.

Maurya (drops MICHAEL'S clothes across BARTLEY'S feet, and sprinkles the Holy Water over him). It isn't that I haven't prayed for you, Bartley, to the Almighty God. It isn't that I haven't said prayers in the dark night till you wouldn't know what I'd be saying; but it's a great rest I'll have now, and it's time surely. It's a great rest I'll have now, and great sleeping in the long nights after Samhain, if it's only a bit of wet flour we do have to eat, and maybe a fish that would be stinking.

She kneels down again, crossing herself, and saying prayers under her breath.

Cathleen (*to an old man*). Maybe yourself and Eamon would make a coffin when the sun rises. We have fine white boards herself bought, God help her, thinking Michael would be found, and I have a new cake you can eat while you'll be working.

The Old Man (looking at the boards). Are there nails with them?

Cathleen. There are not, Colum; we didn't think of the nails.

Another Man. It's a great wonder she wouldn't think of the nails, and all the coffins she's seen made already.

Cathleen. It's getting old she is, and broken.

MAURYA stands up again very slowly and spreads out the pieces of MICHAEL'S clothes beside the body, sprinkling them with the last of the Holy Water.

Nora (in a whisper to CATHLEEN). She's quiet now and easy; but the day Michael was drowned you could hear her crying out from this to the spring well. It's fonder she was of Michael, and would any one have thought that?

Cathleen (slowly and clearly). An old woman will be soon tired with anything she will do, and isn't it nine days herself is after crying and keening, and making great sorrow in the house?

Maurya (puts the empty cup mouth downwards on the table, and lays her hands together on BARTLEY'S jeet). They're all together this time, and the end is come. May the Almighty God have mercy on Bartley's soul, and on Michael's soul, and on the souls of Sheamus and Patch, and Stephen and Shawn (*bending her head*); and may He have mercy on my soul, Nora, and on the soul of every one is left living in the world.

She pauses, and the keen rises a little more loudly from the women, then sinks away.

Maurya (continuing). Michael has a clean burial in the far north, by the grace of the Almighty God. Bartley will have a fine coffin out of the white boards, and a deep grave surely. What more can we want than that? No man at all can be living for ever, and we must be satisfied.

She kneels down again and the curtain falls slowly.

Eugene O'Neill

1888–1953

Eugene Gladstone O'Neill was born on October 16, 1888, in a Broadway hotel in New York City. His father, James O'Neill, was a popular melodramatic actor who made a fortune by playing for almost twenty years in *The Count of Monte Cristo*. His mother, Ella Quinlan O'Neill, was addicted to drugs. His older brother was an alcoholic failure. The O'Neills, like characters in Eugene's plays, were sensitive people in torment.

As a boy, Eugene O'Neill was sometimes taken on road tours with his parents, sometimes put in Roman Catholic boarding schools. He enrolled in Princeton in 1906, but was expelled after one year and spent the next few years drifting from one job and one country to another. He shipped as a sailor to South America and Europe.

In 1912 came the turning point of his life. O'Neill entered a Connecticut sanatorium as a tuberculosis patient. There he had time both to consider his life and to read many books. From Strindberg he learned to appreciate dramatic realism. From Marx he gained a political philosophy. From Freud he learned of the dramas played out in the depths of each man's unconscious. O'Neill determined to become a playwright.

After he left the sanatorium he spent some months at Harvard as a student in Professor George Pierce Baker's famous 47 Workshop. In 1916 the newly organized Provincetown Players gave the first public performance of an O'Neill play, *Bound East for Cardiff*. The Players moved to a New York theater where they presented more of O'Neill's dramas. Then, in 1920, his success was secured when his first full-length play, *Beyond the Horizon*, won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Two other plays were later awarded Pulitzer Prizes—*Anna Christie* (1922) and *Strange Interlude* (1928). In 1936 O'Neill became the first American playwright to receive the Nobel Prize.

About 1947 O'Neill was stricken with Parkinson's disease, a palsy which made it impossible for him to write. He died on November 27, 1953, in Boston of pneumonia. He had been married three times and had three children.

A prolific writer, O'Neill turned out many plays, apparently on a great variety of subjects. With the exception of his one comedy, *Ah, Wilderness!*, however, his dramas all deal with the same general problem—the terrible predicament of man struggling against unseen forces for his place in a universe that is essentially alien to him. Although O'Neill was a talented innovator, bringing many new methods and effects to the stage, his importance as a dramatist rests mainly on the power with which he played variations on his huge theme.

Like the ancient writers of Greek tragedy, O'Neill saw man as the victim and plaything of forces which he could neither understand nor control. For the Greeks these influences were the gods. But for O'Neill they were the powerful forces of the unconscious. They were within man himself.

The Emperor Jones was produced in 1920. Its hero, Brutus Jones, an ex-Pullman porter, has fled to the West Indies to escape punishment for murder. At first he is very successful in the new life he makes for himself. In a mere two years he manages to have himself made Emperor. He rules his subjects with a ruthless and iron hand.

As the play begins, his reign is coming to an end. Jones tries to escape, but he finds himself trapped between civilization and the jungle—between his deepest desires and the guilt he feels. He is unable to throw off his superstition and primitive fear, yet he is equally unable to make a place for himself in modern society.

Tom-toms pound offstage throughout the last two-thirds of the play. This device, an example of O'Neill's theatrical imagination, is extremely powerful. The beat grows louder and faster as Jones races

Notes from the artist: ". . . O'Neill as a boy, suggesting some of the heroes of his plays, who have been described as wandering 'like eternally lost children through a haunted wood.' . . . The other figures are Death, with the ice tongs, from The Iceman Cometh, and a portrait of The Emperor Jones based on a primitive painting of King Christophe of Haiti."



helplessly toward his doom. We have the impression that it is the drum that "catches" Jones, not his rebellious subjects. The tom-toms symbolize his guilt and fear.

In his nightmare dash through the jungle, Jones fires his precious gunshots, one by one, at ghosts, wasting his strength in combating illusions. But the ghosts are in his own mind; he cannot escape them. As he stumbles through the wilderness he discards, piece by piece, the trappings of emperor, of civilization, that he had so proudly collected. He is left naked and alone with himself.

The Emperor Jones was the first modern drama to feature a Negro as a tragic hero. But the basic human situation that the play is about does not depend on its hero being a Negro. All men, O'Neill seems to be saying, are both emperors and fugitives. All men are trapped between civilization and the jungle. All men have guilts and fears, and cannot bear to be alone with their own "ghosts." When Jones is finally brought down by the enemy it is with a silver bullet—in the "'eighth o' style," as Smithers, the cockney trader, says. The Emperor Jones has been defeated by forces stronger than he, but there is great dignity in the defeat.

The Emperor Jones

CAST OF CHARACTERS

BRUTUS JONES, *Emperor.*
HENRY SMITHERS, *a cockney trader.*
AN OLD NATIVE WOMAN.
LEM, *a native chief.*
SOLDIERS, *adherents of Lem.*
THE LITTLE FORMLESS FEARS; JEFF;
THE NEGRO CONVICTS; THE PRISON GUARD; THE PLANTERS;
THE AUCTIONEER; THE SLAVES;
THE CONGO WITCH DOCTOR; THE CROCODILE GOD.

The action of the play takes place on an island in the West Indies as yet not self-determined by white Marines. The form of native government is, for the time being, an empire.

SCENES

SCENE I: *In the palace of the Emperor Jones. Afternoon.*
SCENE II: *The edge of the Great Forest. Dusk.*
SCENE III: *In the Forest. Night.*
SCENE IV: *In the Forest. Night.*
SCENE V: *In the Forest. Night.*
SCENE VI: *In the Forest. Night.*
SCENE VII: *In the Forest. Night.*
SCENE VIII: *Same as Scene II—the edge of the Great Forest. Dawn.*

SCENE I

The audience chamber in the palace of the Emperor—a spacious, high-ceilinged room with bare, whitewashed walls. The floor is of white tiles. In the rear, to the left of center, a wide archway giving out on a portico with white pillars. The palace is evidently situated on high ground for beyond the portico nothing can be seen but a vista of distant hills, their summits crowned with thick groves of palm trees. In the right wall, center, a smaller arched doorway leading to the living quarters of the palace. The room is bare of furniture with the exception of one huge chair made of uncut wood which stands at center, its back to rear. This is very apparently the Emperor's throne. It is painted a dazzling, eye-smiting scarlet. There is a brilliant orange cushion on the seat and another smaller one is placed on the floor to serve as a footstool. Strips of matting, dyed scarlet, lead from the foot of the throne to the two entrances. It is late afternoon but the sunlight still blazes yellowly beyond the portico and there is an oppressive burden of exhausting heat in the air.

As the curtain rises, a native Negro WOMAN sneaks in cautiously from the entrance on the right. She is very old, dressed in cheap calico, barefooted, a red bandana handkerchief covering all but a few stray wisps of white hair. A bundle bound in colored cloth is carried over her shoulder on the end of a stick. She hesitates beside the doorway, peering back as if in extreme dread of being discovered. Then she begins to glide noiselessly, a step at a time, toward the doorway in the rear. At this moment, SMITHERS appears beneath the portico.

SMITHERS is a tall, stoop-shouldered man about forty. His bald head, perched on a long neck with an enormous Adam's apple, looks like an egg. The tropics have tanned his naturally pasty face with its small, sharp features to a sickly yellow, and native rum has painted his pointed nose to a startling red. His little, washy-blue eyes are red rimmed and dart about him like a ferret's. His expression is one of unscrupulous meanness, cowardly and dangerous. He is dressed in a worn riding suit of dirty white drill, puttees, spurs, and wears a white cork helmet. A cartridge belt with an automatic revolver is

around his waist. He carries a riding whip in his hand. He sees the WOMAN and stops to watch her suspiciously. Then, making up his mind, he steps quickly on tiptoe into the room. The WOMAN, looking back over her shoulder continually, does not see him until it is too late. When she does SMITHERS springs forward and grabs her firmly by the shoulder. She struggles to get away, fiercely but silently.

Smithers (tightening his grasp—roughly). Easy! None o' that, me birdie. You can't wiggle out, now I got me 'ooks on yer.

Woman (seeing the uselessness of struggling, gives way to frantic terror, and sinks to the ground, embracing his knees supplicatingly). No tell him! No tell him, Mister!

Smithers (with great curiosity). Tell 'im? (Then scornfully) Oh, you mean 'is bloomin' Majesty. What's the gaime, any'ow? What are you sneakin' away for? Been stealin' a bit, I s'pose. (He taps her bundle with his riding whip significantly.)

Woman (shaking her head vehemently). No, me no steal.

Smithers. Bloody liar! But tell me what's up. There's somethin' funny goin' on. I smelld it in the air first thing I got up this mornin'. You blacks are up to some devilment. This palace of 'is is like a bleedin' tomb. Where's all the 'ands? (The WOMAN keeps sullenly silent. SMITHERS raises his whip threateningly) Ow, yer won't, won't yer? I'll show yer what's what.

Woman (coweringly). I tell, Mister. You no hit. They go—all go. (She makes a sweeping gesture toward the hills in the distance.)

Smithers. Run away—to the 'ills?

Woman. Yes, Mister. Him Emperor—Great Father (she touches her forehead to the floor with a quick mechanical jerk) Him sleep after eat. Then they go—all go. Me old woman. Me left only. Now me go too.

Smithers (his astonishment giving way to an immense, mean satisfaction). Ow! So that's the ticket! Well, I know bloody well wot's in the air—when they runs orf to the 'ills. The tom-tom 'll be thumping out there bloomin' soon. (With extreme vindictiveness) And I'm bloody glad of it, for one! Serve 'im right! Puttin' on airs, the stinkin' nigger! 'Is Majesty! Gawd blimey! I only 'opes I'm there when they takes 'im out to shoot 'im. (Suddenly) 'E's still 'ere all right, ain't 'e?

Woman. Him sleep.

Smithers. 'E's bound to find out soon as 'e wakes up. 'E's cunnin' enough to know when 'is time's come. (He goes to the doorway on right and whistles shrilly with his fingers in his mouth. The old WOMAN springs to her feet and runs out of the doorway, rear. SMITHERS goes after

her, reaching for his revolver) Stop or I'll shoot! (Then stopping-indifferently) Pop orf then, if yer like, yer black cow. (He stands in the doorway, looking after her.)

JONES enters from the right. He is a tall, powerfully built, full-blooded Negro of middle age. His features are typically Negroid, yet there is something decidedly distinctive about his face—an underlying strength of will, a hardy, self-reliant confidence in himself that inspires respect. His eyes are alive with a keen, cunning intelligence. In manner he is shrewd, suspicious, evasive. He wears a light blue uniform coat, sprayed with brass buttons, heavy gold chevrons on his shoulders, gold braid on the collar, cuffs, etc. His pants are bright red with a light blue stripe down the side. Patent leather laced boots with brass spurs, and a belt with a long-barreled, pearl-handled revolver in a holster complete his make up. Yet there is something not altogether ridiculous about his grandeur. He has a way of carrying it off.

Jones (not seeing anyone—greatly irritated and blinking sleepily—shouts). Who dare whistle dat way in my palace? Who dare wake up de Emperor? I'll git de hide frayled off some o' you niggers sho'!

Smithers (showing himself—in a manner half-afraid and half-defiant). It was me whistled to yer. (As JONES frowns angrily) I got news for yer.

Jones (putting on his suavest manner, which fails to cover up his contempt for the white man). Oh, it's you, Mister Smithers. (He sits down on his throne with easy dignity) What news you got to tell me?

Smithers (coming close to enjoy his discomfiture). Don't yer notice nothin' funny today?

Jones (coldly). Funny? No. I ain't perceived nothin' of de kind!

Smithers. Then yer ain't so foxy as I thought yer was. Where's all your court? (Sarcastically) The Generals and the Cabinet Ministers and all?

Jones (imperturbably). Where dey mostly runs to minute I closes my eyes—drinkin' rum and talkin' big down in de town. (Sarcastically) How come you don't know dat? Ain't you sousin' with 'em most every day?

Smithers (stung but pretending indifference—with a wink). That's part of the day's work. I got ter—ain't I—in my business?

Jones (contemptuously). Yo' business!

Smithers (imprudently enraged). Gawd blimey, you was glad enough

for me ter take yer in on it when you landed here first. You didn't 'ave no 'igh and mighty airs in them days!

Jones (his hand going to his revolver like a flash—menacingly). Talk polite, white man! Talk polite, you heah me! I'm boss heah now, is you fergettin'? (*The COCKNEY seems about to challenge this last statement with the facts but something in the other's eyes holds and cows him.*)

Smithers (in a cowardly whine). No 'arm meant, old top.

Jones (condescendingly). I accepts yo' apology. (*Lets his hand fall from his revolver*) No use'n you rakin' up ole times. What I was den is one thing. What I is now 's another. You didn't let me in on yo' crooked work out o' no kind feelin's dat time. I done de dirty work fo' you—and most o' de brainwork, too, fo' dat matter—and I was wu'th money to you, dat's de reason.

Smithers. Well, blimey, I give yer a start, didn't I?—when no one else would. I wasn't afraid to 'ire you like the rest was—'count of the story about your breakin' jail back in the States.

Jones. No, you didn't have no s'cuse to look down on me fo' dat. You been in jail you'self more'n once.

Smithers (furiously). It's a lie! (*Then trying to pass it off by an attempt at scorn*) Garn! Who told yer that fairy tale?

Jones. Dey's some tings I ain't got to be tole. I kin see 'em in folk's eyes. (*Then after a pause—meditatively*) Yes, you sho' give me a start. And it didn't take long from dat time to git dese fool, woods' niggers right where I wanted dem. (*With pride*) From stowaway to Emperor in two years! Dat's goin' some!

Smithers (with curiosity). And I bet you got yer pile o' money 'id safe some place.

Jones (with satisfaction). I sho' has! And it's in a foreign bank where no pusson don't ever git it out but me no matter what come. You didn't s'pose I was holdin' down dis Emperor job for de glory in it, did you? Sho'! De fuss and glory part of it, dat's only to turn de heads o' de low-flung, bush niggers dat's here. Dey wants de big circus show for deir money. I gives it to 'em an' I gits de money. (*With a grin*) De long green, dat's me every time! (*Then rebukingly*) But you ain't got no kick agin me, Smithers. I'se paid you back all you done for me many times. Ain't I pertected you and winked at all de crooked tradin' you been doin' right out in de broad day? Sho' I has—and me makin' laws to stop it at de same time! (*He chuckles.*)

Smithers (grinning). But, meanin' no 'arm, you been grabbin' right and

left yourself, ain't yer? Look at the taxes you've put on 'em! Blimey!
You've squeezed 'em dry!

Jones (chuckling). No, dey ain't *all* dry yet. I'se still heah, ain't I?

Smithers (smiling at his secret thought). They're dry right now, you'll find out. (*Changing the subject abruptly*) And as for me breakin' laws, you've broke 'em all yerself just as fast as yer made 'em.

Jones. Ain't I de Emperor? De laws don't go for him. (*Judicially*) You heah what I tells you, Smithers. Dere's little stealin' like you does, and dere's big stealin' like I does. For de little stealin' dey gits you in jail soon or late. For de big stealin' dey makes you Emperor and puts you in de Hall o' Fame when you croaks. (*Reminiscently*) If dey's one thing I learns in ten years on de Pullman ca's listenin' to de white quality talk, it's dat same fact. And when I gits a chance to use it I winds up Emperor in two years.

Smithers (unable to repress the genuine admiration of the small fry for the large). Yes, yer turned the bleedin' trick, all right. Blimey, I never seen a bloke 'as 'ad the bloomin' luck you 'as.

Jones (severely). Luck? What you mean—luck?

Smithers. I suppose you'll say as that swank about the silver bullet ain't luck—and that was what first got the fool blacks on yer side the time of the revolution, wasn't it?

Jones (with a laugh). Oh, dat silver bullet! Sho' was luck. But I makes dat luck, you heah? I loads de dice! Yessuh! When dat murderin' nigger ole Lem hired to kill me takes aim ten feet away and his gun misses fire and I shoots him dead, what you heah me say?

Smithers. You said yer'd got a charm so's no lead bullet'd kill yer. You was so strong only a silver bullet could kill yer, you told 'em. Blimey, wasn't that swank for yer—and plain, fat-eaded luck?

Jones (proudly). I got brains and I uses 'em quick. Dat ain't luck.

Smithers. Yer know they wasn't 'ardly liable to get no silver bullets. And it was luck 'e didn't 'it you that time.

Jones (laughing). And dere all dem fool bush niggers was kneelin' down and bumpin' deir heads on de ground like I was a miracle out o' de Bible. Oh, Lawd, from dat time on I has dem all eatin' out of my hand. I cracks de whip and dey jumps through.

Smithers (with a sniff) Yankee bluff done it.

Jones. Ain't a man's talkin' big what makes him big—long as he makes folks believe it? Sho', I talks large when I ain't got nothin' to back it up, but I ain't talkin' wild just de same. I knows I kin fool 'em—I

knows it—and dat's backin' enough fo' my game. And ain't I got to learn deir lingo and teach some of dem English befo' I kin talk to 'em? Ain't dat wuk? You ain't never learned ary word er it, Smithers, in de ten years you been heah, dough you knows it's money in yo' pocket tradin' wid 'em if you does. But you'se too shiftless to take de trouble.

Smithers (flushing). Never mind about me. What's this I've 'eard about yer really 'avin' a silver bullet moulded for yourself?

Jones. It's playin' out my bluff. I has de silver bullet moulded and I tells 'em when de time comes I kills myself wid it. I tells 'em dat's 'cause I'm de on'y man in de world big enuff to git me. No use'n deir tryin'. And dey falls down and bumps deir heads. (*He laughs*) I does dat so's I kin take a walk in peace widout no jealous nigger gunnin' at me from behind de trees.

Smithers (astonished). Then you 'ad it made—'onest?

Jones. Sho' did. Heah she be. (*He takes out his revolver, breaks it, and takes the silver bullet out of one chamber*) Five lead an' dis silver baby at de last. Don't she shine pretty? (*He holds it in his hand, looking at it admiringly, as if strangely fascinated.*)

Smithers. Let me see. (*Reaches out his hand for it.*)

Jones (harshly). Keep yo' hands whar dey b'long, white man. (*He replaces it in the chamber and puts the revolver back on his hip.*)

Smithers (snarling). Gawd blimey! Think I'm a bleedin' thief, you would.

Jones. No, 'tain't dat. I knows you'se scared to steal from me. On'y I ain't 'lowin' nary body to touch dis baby. She's my rabbit's foot.

Smithers (sneering). A bloomin' charm, wot? (*Venomously*) Well, you'll need all the bloody charms you 'as before long, s' 'elp me!

Jones (judicially). Oh, I'se good for six months yit 'fore dey gits sick o' my game. Den, when I sees trouble comin', I makes my getaway.

Smithers. Ho! You got it all planned, ain't yer?

Jones. I ain't no fool. I knows dis Emperor's time is sho't. Dat why I make hay when de sun shine. Was you thinkin' I'se aimin' to hold down dis job for life? No, suh! What good is gittin' money if you stays back in dis raggedy country? I wants action when I spends. And when I sees dese niggers gittin' up deir nerve to tu'n me out, and I'se got all de money in sight, I resigns on de spot and beats it quick.

Smithers. Where to?

Jones. None o' yo' business.

Smithers. Not back to the bloody States, I'll lay my oath.

Jones (suspiciously). Why don't I? (*Then with an easy laugh*) You mean 'count
of dat story 'bout me breakin' from jail back dere? Dat's all talk.

Smithers (skeptically). Ho, yes!

Jones (sharply). You ain't 'sinuatin' I'se a liar, is you?

Smithers (hastily). No, Gawd strike me! I was only thinkin' o' the
bloody lies you told the blacks 'ere about killin' white men in
the States.

Jones (angered). How come dey're lies?

Smithers. You'd 'ave been in jail if you 'ad, wouldn't yer then? (*With
venom*) And from what I've 'eard, it ain't 'ealthy for a black to kill a
white man in the States. They burns 'em in oil, don't they?

Jones (with cool deadliness). You mean lynchin' 'd scare me? Well, I tells
you, Smithers, maybe I does kill one white man back dere. Maybe I
does. And maybe I kills another right heah 'fore long if he don't
look out.

Smithers (trying to force a laugh). I was on'y spoofin' yer. Can't yer take a
joke? And you was just sayin' you'd never been in jail.

Jones (in the same tone—slightly boastful). Maybe I goes to jail dere for
gettin' in an argument wid razors ovah a crap game. Maybe I gits
twenty years when dat colored man die. Maybe I gits in 'nother
argument wid de prison guard was overseer ovah us when we're
wukin' de road. Maybe he hits me wid a whip and I splits his
head wid a shovel and runs away and files de chain off my leg
and gits away safe. Maybe I does all dat an' maybe I don't. It's a
story I tells you so's you knows I'se de kind of man dat if you
evah repeats one word of it, I ends yo' stealin' on dis yearth
mighty damn quick!

Smithers (terrified). Think I'd peach on yer? Not me! Ain't I always been
yer friend?

Jones (suddenly relaxing). Sho' you has—and you better be.

Smithers (recovering his composure—and with it his malice). And just to show yer
I'm yer friend, I'll tell yer that bit o' news I was goin' to.

Jones. Go ahead! Shoot de piece. Must be bad news from de happy way
you look.

Smithers (warningly). Maybe it's gettin' time for you to resign—with that
bloomin' silver bullet, wot? (*He finishes with a mocking grin.*)

Jones (puzzled). What's dat you say? Talk plain.

Smithers. Ain't noticed any of the guards or servants about the place
today, I 'aven't.

Jones (carelessly). Dey're all out in de garden sleepin' under de trees.

When I sleeps, dey sneaks a sleep, too, and I pretends I never suspicions it. All I got to do is to ring de bell and dey come flyin', makin' a bluff dey was wukin' all de time.

Smithers (in the same mocking tone). Ring the bell now an' you'll bloody well see what I means.

Jones (startled to alertness, but preserving the same careless tone). Sho' I rings. (*He reaches below the throne and pulls out a big, common dinner bell which is painted the same vivid scarlet as the throne. He rings this vigorously—then stops to listen. Then he goes to both doors, rings again, and looks out.*)

Smithers (watching him with malicious satisfaction, after a pause—mockingly).

The bloody ship is sinkin' an' the bleedin' rats 'as slung their 'ooks.

Jones (in a sudden fit of anger flings the bell clattering into a corner). Low-flung, woods' niggers! (*Then catching SMITHERS' eye on him, he controls himself and suddenly bursts into a low chuckling laugh.*) Reckon I overplays my hand dis once! A man can't take de pot on a bobtailed flush all de time. Was I sayin' I'd sit in six months mo'? Well, I'se changed my mind den. I cashes in and resigns de job of Emperor right dis minute.

Smithers (with real admiration). Blimey, but you're a cool bird, and no mistake.

Jones. No use'n fussin'. When I knows de game's up I kisses it good-by widout no long waits. Dey've all run off to de hills, ain't dey?

Smithers. Yes—every bleedin' man jack of 'em.

Jones. Den de revolution is at de post. And de Emperor better git his feet smokin' up de trail. (*He starts for the door in rear.*)

Smithers. Goin' out to look for your 'orse? Yer won't find any. They steals the 'orses first thing. Mine was gone when I went for 'im this mornin'. That's wot first give me a suspicion of wot was up.

Jones (alarmed for a second, scratches his head, then philosophically). Well, den I hoofs it. Feet, do yo' duty! (*He pulls out a gold watch and looks at it*) Three-thuty. Sundown's at six-thuty or dereabouts. (*Puts his watch back—with cool confidence*) I got plenty o' time to make it easy.

Smithers. Don't be so bloomin' sure of it. They'll be after you 'ot and 'eavy. Ole Lem is at the bottom o' this business an' 'e 'ates you like 'ell. 'E'd rather do for you than eat 'is dinner, 'e would!

Jones (scornfully). Dat fool no-count nigger! Does you think I'se scared o'

him? I stands him on his thick head more'n once befo' dis, and I does it again if he comes in my way—(*Fiercely*) And dis time I leave him a dead nigger fo' sho'!

Smithers. You'll 'ave to cut through the big forest—an' these blacks 'ere can sniff and follow a trail in the dark like 'ounds. You'd 'ave to 'ustle to get through that forest in twelve hours even if you knew all the bloomin' trails like a native.

Jones (with indignant scorn). Look-a-heah, white man! Does you think I'se a natural bo'n fool? Give me credit fo' havin' some sense, fo' Lawd's sake! Don't you s'pose I'se looked ahead and made sho' of all de chances? I'se gone out in dat big forest, pretendin' to hunt, so many times dat I knows it high an' low like a book. I could go through on dem trails wid my eyes shut. (*With great contempt*) Think dese ign'rent bush niggers dat ain't got brains enuff to know deir own names even can catch Brutus Jones? Huh, I s'pects not! Not on yo' life! Why, man, de white men went after me wid blood-hounds where I come from an' I jes' laughs at 'em. It's a shame to fool dese black trash around heah, dey're so easy. You watch me, man. I'll make dem look sick, I will. I'll be 'cross de plain to de edge of de forest by time dark comes. Once in de woods in de night dey got a swell chance o' findin' dis baby! Dawn tomorrow I'll be out at de oder side and on de coast whar dat French gunboat is stayin'. She picks me up, takes me to Martinique when she go dar, and dere I is safe wid a mighty big bank roll in my jeans. It's easy as rollin' off a log.

Smithers (maliciously). But s'posin' somethin' 'appens wrong an' they do nab yer?

Jones (decisively). Dey don't-dat's de answer.

Smithers. But, just for argyment's sake—what'd you do?

Jones (frowning). I'se got five lead bullets in dis gun good enuff fo' common bush niggers—and after dat I got de silver bullet left to cheat 'em out o' gittin' me.

Smithers (feelingly). Ho, I was fergettin' that silver bullet. You'll bump yourself orf in style, won't yer? Blimey!

Jones (gloomily). You kin bet yo' whole roll on one thing, white man. Dis baby plays out his string to de end and when he quits, he quits wid a bang de way he ought. Silver bullet ain't none too good for him when he go, dat's a fac'! (*Then shaking off his nervousness—with a confident laugh*) Sho'! What is I talkin' about? Ain't come to dat yit and I never will—not wid trash niggers like

dese yere. (*Boastfully*) Silver bullet bring me luck anyway. I kin outguess, outrun, outfit, an' outplay de whole lot o' dem all ovah de board any time o' de day er night! You watch me! (*From the distant hills comes the faint, steady thump of a tom-tom, low and vibrating. It starts at a rate exactly corresponding to normal pulse beat—72 to the minute—and continues at a gradually accelerating rate from this point uninterruptedly to the very end of the play.*)

JONES (*starts at the sound. A strange look of apprehension creeps into his face for a moment as he listens. Then he asks, with an attempt to regain his most casual manner*). What's dat drum beatin' fo'?

Smithers (*with a mean grin*). For you. That means the bleedin' ceremony 'as started. I've 'eard it before and I knows.

Jones. Cer'mony? What cer'mony?

Smithers. The blacks is 'oldin' a bloody meetin', 'avin' a war dance, gettin' their courage worked up b'fore they starts after you.

Jones. Let dem! Dey'll sho' need it!

Smithers. And they're there 'oldin' their 'eathen religious service—makin' no end of devil spells and charms to 'elp 'em against yer silver bullet. (*He guffaws loudly*) Blimey, but they're balmy as 'ell!

Jones (*a tiny bit awed and shaken in spite of himself*). Huh! Takes more'n dat to scare dis chicken!

Smithers (*scenting the other's feeling—maliciously*). Ternight when it's pitch black in the forest, they'll 'ave their pet devils and ghosts 'oundin' after you. You'll find yer bloody 'air 'll be standin' on end before termorrow mornin'. (*Seriously*) It's a bleedin' queer place, that stinkin' forest, even in daylight. Yer don't know what might 'appen in there, it's that rotten still. Always sends the cold shivers down my back minute I gets in it.

Jones (*with a contemptuous sniff*). I ain't no chicken liver like you is. Trees an' me, we'se friends, and dar's a full moon comin' bring me light. And let dem po' niggers make all de fool spells dey'se a min' to. Does yo' s'pect I'se silly enuff to b'lieve in ghosts an' ha'nts an' all dat ole woman's talk? G'long, white man! You ain't talkin' to me. (*With a chuckle*) Doesn't you know dey's got to do wid a man was member in good standin' o' de Baptist Church? Sho' I was dat when I was porter on de Pullmans, befo' I gits into my little trouble. Let dem try deir heathen tricks. De Baptist Church done perfect me and land dem all in hell. (*Then with more confident satisfaction*) And I'se got little silver bullet o' my own, don't forgit!

Smithers. Ho! You 'aven't give much 'eed to your Baptist Church since

you been down 'ere. I've 'eard myself you 'ad turned yer coat an' was takin' up with their blarsted witch doctors, or whatever the 'ell yer calls the swine.

Jones (vehemently). I pretends to! Sho' I pretends! Dat's part o' my game from de fust. If I finds out dem niggers believes dat black is white, den I yells it out louder 'n deir loudest. It don't git me nothin' to do missionary work for de Baptist Church. I'se after de coin, an' I lays my Jesus on de shelf for de time bein'. (*Stops abruptly to look at his watch—alertly*) But I ain't got de time to waste on no more fool talk wid you. I'se gwine away from heah dis secon'. (*He reaches in under the throne and pulls out an expensive Panama hat with a bright multicolored band and sets it jauntily on his head*) So long, white man! (*With a grin*) See you in jail sometime, maybe!

Smithers. Not me, you won't. Well, I wouldn't be in yer bloody boots for no bloomin' money, but 'ere's wishin' yer luck just the same.

Jones (contemptuously). You're de frightenedest man evah I see! I tells you I'se safe's 'f I was in New York City. It takes dem niggers from now to dark to git up de nerve to start somethin'. By dat time, I'se got a head start dey never kotch up wid.

Smithers (maliciously). Give my regards to any ghosts yer meets up with.

Jones (grinning). If dat ghost got money, I'll tell him never ha'nt you less'n he wants to lose it.

Smithers (flattered). Garn! (*Then curiously*) Ain't yer takin' no luggage with yer?

Jones. I travels light when I wants to move fast. And I got tinned grub buried on de edge o' de forest. (*Boastfully*) Now say dat I don't look ahead an' use my brains! (*With a wide, liberal gesture*) I will all dat's left in de palace to you—and you better grab all you kin sneak away wid befo' dey gits here.

Smithers (gratefully). Righto—and thanks ter yer. (*As JONES walks toward the door in rear—cautiously*) Say! Look 'ere, you ain't goin' out that way, are yer?

Jones. Does you think I'd slink out de back door like a common nigger? I'se Emperor yit, ain't I? And de Emperor Jones leaves de way he comes, and dat black trash don't dare stop him—not yit, leastways. (*He stops for a moment in the doorway, listening to the far-off but insistent beat of the tom-tom*) Listen to dat roll call, will you? Must be mighty big drum carry dat far. (*Then with a laugh*) Well, if dey ain't no whole brass band to see me off, I sho' got de drum part of it. So long, white man. (*He puts his hands in his pockets and with*

studied carelessness, whistling a tune, he saunters out of the doorway and off to the left.)

Smithers (looks after him with a puzzled admiration). 'E's got 'is bloomin' nerve with 'im, s'elp me! (Then angrily) Ho—the bleedin' nigger—puttin' on 'is bloody airs! I 'opes they nabs 'im an' gives 'im what's what!

SCENE II

The end of the plain where the Great Forest begins. The foreground is sandy, level ground dotted by a few stones and clumps of stunted bushes cowering close against the earth to escape the buffeting of the trade wind. In the rear the forest is a wall of darkness dividing the world. Only when the eye becomes accustomed to the gloom can the outlines of separate trunks of the nearest trees be made out, enormous pillars of deeper blackness. A somber monotone of wind lost in the leaves moans in the air. Yet this sound serves but to intensify the impression of the forest's relentless immobility, to form a background throwing into relief its brooding, implacable silence.

JONES enters from the left, walking rapidly. He stops as he nears the edge of the forest, looks around him quickly, peering into the dark as if searching for some familiar landmark. Then, apparently satisfied that he is where he ought to be, he throws himself on the ground, dog-tired.

Well, heah I is. In de nick o' time, too! Little mo' an' it'd be blacker'n de ace of spades heahabouts. (*He pulls a bandana handkerchief from his hip pocket and mops off his perspiring face*) Sho'! Gimme air! I'se tuckered out sho' 'nuff. Dat soft Emperor job ain't no trainin' fo' a long hike ovah dat plain in de brilin' sun. (*Then with a chuckle*) Cheer up, nigger, de worst is yet to come. (*He lifts his head and stares at the forest. His chuckle peters out abruptly. In a tone of awe*) My goodness, look at dem woods, will you? Dat no-count Smithers said dey'd be black an' he sho' called de turn. (*Turning away from them quickly and looking down at his feet, he snatches at a chance to change the subject—solicitously*) Feet, you is holdin' up yo' end fine an' I sutinly hopes you ain't blisterin' none. It's time you git a rest. (*He takes off his shoes, his eyes studiously avoiding the forest. He feels of the soles of his feet gingerly*) You is still in de pink—on'y a little mite feverish. Cool yo'selfs. Remember you done got a long journey yit befo' you. (*He sits in a weary attitude, listening to the*

rhythmic beating of the tom-tom. He grumbles in a loud tone to cover up a growing uneasiness) Bush niggers! Wonder dey wouldn't git sick o' beatin' dat drum. Sound louder, seem like. I wonder if dey's startin' after me? (He scrambles to his feet, looking back across the plain) Couldn't see dem now, nohow, if dey was hundred feet away. (Then shaking himself like a wet dog to get rid of these depressing thoughts) Sho', dey's miles an' miles behind. What you gittin' fidgety about? (But he sits down and begins to lace up his shoes in great haste, all the time muttering reassuringly) You know what? Yo' belly is empty, dat's what's de matter wid you. Come time to eat! Wid nothin' but wind on yo' stomach, o' course you feels jiggedy. Well, we eats right heah an' now soon's I gits dese pesky shoes laced up. (He finishes lacing up his shoes) Dere! Now le's see! (Gets on his hands and knees and searches the ground around him with his eyes) White stone, white stone, where is you? (He sees the first white stone and crawls to it—with satisfaction) Heah you is! I knowed dis was de right place. Box of grub, come to me. (He turns over the stone and feels in under it—in a tone of dismay) Ain't heah! Gorry, is I in de right place or isn't I? Dere's 'nother stone. Guess dat's it. (He scrambles to the next stone and turns it over) Ain't heah, neither! Grub, whar is you? Ain't heah. Gorry, has I got to go hungry into dem woods—all de night? (While he is talking he scrambles from one stone to another, turning them over in frantic haste. Finally, he jumps to his feet excitedly) Is I lost de place? Must have! But how dat happen when I was followin' de trail across de plain in broad daylight? (Almost plaintively) I'se hungry, I is! I gotta git my feed. Whar's my strength gonna come from if I doesn't? Gorry, I gotta find dat grub high an' low somehow! Why it come dark so quick like dat? Can't see nothin'. (He scratches a match on his trousers and peers about him. The rate of the beat of the far-off tom-tom increases perceptibly as he does so. He mutters in a bewildered voice) How come all dese white stones come heah when I only remembers one? (Suddenly, with a frightened gasp, he flings the match on the ground and stamps on it) Nigger, is you gone crazy mad? Is you lightin' matches to show dem whar you is? Fo' Lawd's sake, use yo' haid. Gorry, I'se got to be careful! (He stares at the plain behind him apprehensively, his hand on his revolver) But how come all dese white stones? And whar's dat tin box o' grub I hid all wrapped up in oilcloth?

While his back is turned, the LITTLE FORMLESS FEARS creep out from the deeper blackness of the forest. They are black, shapeless, only

their glittering little eyes can be seen. If they have any describable form at all it is that of a grubworm about the size of a creeping child. They move noiselessly, but with deliberate, painful effort, striving to raise themselves on end, failing and sinking prone again. JONES turns about to face the forest. He stares up at the tops of the trees, seeking vainly to discover his whereabouts by their conformation.

Can't tell nothin' from dem trees! Gorry, no thin' 'round heah looks like I evah seed it befo'. I'se done lost de place sho' 'nuff! (*With mournful foreboding*) It's mighty queer! It's mighty queer! (*With sudden forced defiance—in an angry tone*) Woods, is you tryin' to put somethin' ovah on me? (*From the formless creatures on the ground in front of him comes a tiny gale of low mocking laughter like a rustling of leaves. They squirm upward toward him in twisted attitudes.* JONES looks down, leaps backward with a yell of terror, yanking out his revolver as he does so—in a quavering voice) What's dat? Who's dar? What is you? Git away from me befo' I shoots you up! You don't?—

He fires. There is a flash, a loud report, then silence broken only by the far-off, quickened throb of the tom-tom. The formless creatures have scurried back into the forest. JONES remains fixed in his position, listening intently. The sound of the shot, the reassuring feel of the revolver in his hand, have somewhat restored his shaken nerve. He addresses himself with renewed confidence.

Dey're gone. Dat shot fix 'em. Dey was only little animals—little wild pigs, I reckon. Dey've maybe rooted out yo' grub an' eat it. Sho', you fool nigger, what you think dey is—ha'nts? (*Excitedly*) Gorry, you give de game away when you fire dat shot. Dem niggers heah dat fo' su'tin! Time you beat it in de woods widout no long waits. (*He starts for the forest—hesitates before the plunge—then urging himself in with manful resolution*) Git in, nigger! What you skeered at? Ain't nothin' dere but de trees! Git in! (*He plunges boldly into the forest.*)

SCENE III

In the forest. The moon has just risen. Its beams, drifting through the canopy of leaves, make a barely perceptible, suffused, eerie glow. A dense low wall of underbrush and creepers is in the nearer foreground, fencing in a small triangular clearing. Beyond this is the massed blackness of the forest like an encompassing barrier. A path

is dimly discerned leading down to the clearing from left, rear, and winding away from it again toward the right. As the scene opens nothing can be distinctly made out. Except for the beating of the tom-tom, which is a trifle louder and quicker than at the close of the previous scene, there is silence, broken every few seconds by a queer, clicking sound. Then gradually the figure of the Negro JEFF can be discerned crouching on his haunches at the rear of the triangle. He is middle aged, thin, brown in color, is dressed in a Pullman porter's uniform and cap. He is throwing a pair of dice on the ground before him, picking them up, shaking them, casting them out with the regular, rigid, mechanical movements of an automaton. The heavy, plodding footsteps of someone approaching along the trail from the left are heard and JONES' voice, pitched on a slightly higher key and strained in a cheery effort to overcome its own tremors.

De moon's rizen. Does you heah dat, nigger? You gits more light from dis out. No mo' buttin' yo' fool head agin' de trunks an' scratchin' de hide off yo' legs in de bushes. Now you sees whar yo'se gwine. So cheer up! From now on you has a snap. (*He steps just to the rear of the triangular clearing and mops of his face on his sleeve. He has lost his Panama hat. His face is scratched, his brilliant uniform shows several large rents*) What time's it gittin' to be, I wonder? I dassent light no match to find out. Phoo'. It's wa'm an' dat's a fac'! (*Wearily*) How long I been makin' tracks in dese woods? Must be hours an' hours. Seems like fo'evah! Yit can't be, when de moon's jes' riz. Dis am a long night fo' yo', yo' Majesty! (*With a mournful chuckle*) Majesty! Der ain't much majesty 'bout dis baby now. (*With attempted cheerfulness*) Never min'. It's all part o' de game. Dis night come to an end like everything else. And when you gits dar safe and has dat bank roll in yo' hands you laughs at all dis. (*He starts to whistle but checks himself abruptly*) What yo' whistlin' for, you po'dope! Want all de worl' to heah you? (*He stops talking to listen*) Heah dat ole drum! Sho' gits nearer from de sound. Dey's packin' it along wid 'em. Time fo' me to move. (*He takes a step forward, then stops—worriedly*) What's dat odder queer clickety sound I heah? Dere it is! Sound close! Sound like—sound like— Fo' God sake, sound like some nigger was shootin' crap! (*Frightenedly*) I better beat it quick when I gits dem notions. (*He walks quickly into the clear space—then stands transfixed as he sees JEFF—in a terrified gasp*) Who dar? Who dat? Is dat you, Jeff? (*Starting toward the other, forgetful for a moment of his*

surroundings and really believing it is a living man that he sees—in a tone of happy relief) Jeff! I'se sho' mighty glad to see you! Dey tol' me you done died from dat razor cut I gives you. (Stopping suddenly, bewilderedly) But how you come to be heah, nigger? (He stares fascinatedly at the other who continues his mechanical play with the dice. JONES' eyes begin to roll wildly. He stutters) Ain't you gwine—look up—can't you speak to me? Is you—is you—a ha'nt? (He jerks out his revolver in a frenzy of terrified rage) Nigger, I kills you dead once. Has I got to kill you ag'in? You take it den. (He fires. When the smoke clears away JEFF has disappeared. JONES stands trembling—then with a certain reassurance) He's gone, anyway. Ha'nt or not ha'nt, dat shot fix him. (The beat of the far-off tom-tom is perceptibly louder and more rapid. JONES becomes conscious of it—with a start, looking back over his shoulder) Dey's gittin' near! Dey's comin' fast! And heah I is shootin' shots to let 'em know jes' whar I is! Oh, Gorry, I'se got to run. (Forgetting the path he plunges wildly into the underbrush in the rear and disappears in the shadow.)

SCENE IV

In the forest. A wide dirt road runs diagonally from right, front, to left, rear. Rising sheer on both sides the forest walls it in. The moon is now up. Under its light the road glimmers ghastly and unreal. It is as if the forest had stood aside momentarily to let the road pass through and accomplish its veiled purpose. This done, the forest will fold in upon itself again and the road will be no more. JONES stumbles in from the forest on the right. His uniform is ragged and torn. He looks about him with numbed surprise when he sees the road, his eyes blinking in the bright moonlight. He flops down exhaustedly and pants heavily for a while. Then with sudden anger.

I'm meltin' wid heat! Runnin' an' runnin' an' runnin'! Damn dis heah coat! Like a strait jacket! (He tears off his coat and flings it away from him, revealing himself stripped to the waist) Dere! Dat's better! Now I kin breathe! (Looking down at his feet, the spurs catch his eye) And to hell wid dese high-fangled spurs. Dey're what's been a-trippin' me up an' breakin' my neck. (He unstraps them and flings them away disgustedly) Dere! I gits rid o' dem frippety Emperor trappin's an' I travels lighter. Lawd! I'se tired! (After a pause, listening to the insistent beat of the tom-tom in the distance) I must 'a' put some distance between my-

self an' dem—runnin' like dat—and yit—dat damn drum sounds jes' de same—nearer, even. Well, I guess I a'most holds my lead anyhow. Dey won't never catch up. (*With a sigh*) If on'y my fool legs stands up. Oh, I'se sorry I evah went in for dis. Dat Emperor job is sho' hard to shake. (*He looks around him suspiciously*) How'd dis road evah git heah? Good level road, too. I never remembers seein' it befo'. (*Shaking his head apprehensively*) Dese woods is sho' full o' de queerest things at night. (*With a sudden terror*) Lawd God, don't let me see no more o' dem ha'nts! Dey gits my goat! (*Then trying to talk himself into confidence*) Ha'nts! You fool nigger, dey ain't no such things! Don't de Baptist parson tell you dat many time? Is you civilized, or is you like dese ign'rrent black niggers heah? Sho'! Dat was all in yo' own head. Wasn't nothin' dere. Wasn't no Jeff! Know what? You jus' get seein' dem things 'cause yo' belly's empty and you's sick wid hunger inside. Hunger 'fects yo' head and yo' eyes. Any fool know dat. (*Then pleading fervently*) But bless God, I don't come across no more o' dem, whatever dey is! (*Then cautiously*) Rest! Don't talk! Rest! You needs it. Den you gits on yo' way again. (*Looking at the moon*) Night's half gone a'most. You hits de coast in de mawning! Den you's all safe.

From the right forward a small gang of Negroes enter. They are dressed in striped convict suits, their heads are shaven, one leg drags limpingly, shackled to a heavy ball and chain. Some carry picks, the others shovels. They are followed by a white man dressed in the uniform of a prison guard. A Winchester rifle is slung across his shoulders and he carries a heavy whip. At a signal from the GUARD they stop on the road opposite where JONES is sitting. JONES, who has been staring up at the sky, unmindful of their noiseless approach, suddenly looks down and sees them. His eyes pop out, he tries to get to his feet and fly, but sinks back, too numbed by fright to move. His voice catches in a choking prayer.

Lawd Jesus!

The PRISON GUARD cracks his whip—noiselessly—and at that signal all the convicts start to work on the road. They swing their picks, they shovel, but not a sound comes from their labor. Their movements, like those of JEFF in the preceding scene, are those of automatons—rigid, slow, and mechanical. The PRISON GUARD points sternly at JONES with his whip, motions him to take his place among the other shovelers. JONES gets to his feet in a hypnotized stupor. He mumbles subserviently.

Yes, suh! Yes, suh! I'se comin'.

As he shuffles, dragging one foot, over to his place, he curses under his breath with rage and hatred.

God damn yo' soul, I gits even wid you yit, sometime.

As if there were a shovel in his hands he goes through weary, mechanical gestures of digging up dirt, and throwing it to the roadside. Suddenly the GUARD approaches him angrily, threateningly. He raises his whip and lashes JONES viciously across the shoulders with it. JONES winces with pain and cowers abjectly. The GUARD turns his back on him and walks away contemptuously. Instantly JONES straightens up. With arms upraised as if his shovel were a club in his hands he springs murderously at the unsuspecting GUARD. In the act of crashing down his shovel on the white man's skull, JONES suddenly becomes aware that his hands are empty. He cries despairingly.

Whar's my shovel? Gimme my shovel 'til I splits his damn head!
(Appealing to his fellow convicts) Gimme a shovel, one o' you, fo' God's sake!

They stand fixed in motionless attitudes, their eyes on the ground. The GUARD seems to wait expectantly, his back turned to the attacker. JONES bellows with baffled, terrified rage, tugging frantically at his revolver.

I kills you, you white debil, if it's de last thing I evah does! Ghost or debil, I kill you agin!

He frees the revolver and fires point blank at the GUARD'S back. Instantly the walls of the forest close in from both sides, the road and the figures of the convict gang are blotted out in an enshrouding darkness. The only sounds are a crashing in the underbrush as JONES leaps away in mad flight and the throbbing of the tom-tom still far distant, but increased in volume of sound and rapidity of beat.

SCENE V

A large circular clearing, enclosed by the serried ranks of gigantic trunks of tall trees whose tops are lost to view. In the center is a big dead stump worn by time into a curious resemblance to an auction block. The moon floods the clearing with a clear light. JONES forces his way in through the forest on the left. He looks wildly about the

clearing with hunted, fearful glances. His pants are in tatters, his shoes cut and misshapen, flapping about his feet. He slinks cautiously to the stump in the center and sits down in a tense position, ready for instant flight. Then he holds his head in his hands and rocks back and forth, moaning to himself miserably.

Oh, Lawd, Lawd! Oh, Lawd, Lawd! (*Suddenly he throws himself on his knees and raises his clasped hands to the sky—in a voice of agonized pleading*) Lawd Jesus, heah my prayer! I'se a po' sinner, a po' sinner! I knows I done wrong, I knows it! When I cotches Jeff cheatin' wid loaded dice my anger overcomes me and I kills him dead! Lawd, I done wrong! When dat guard hits me wid de whip, my anger overcomes me, and I kills him dead. Lawd, I done wrong! And down heah whar dese fool bush niggers raises me up to the seat o' de mighty, I steals all I could grab. Lawd, I done wrong! I knows it! I'se sorry! Forgive me, Lawd! Forgive dis po' sinner! (*Then beseeching terrifiedly*) And keep dem away, Lawd! Keep dem away from me! And stop dat drum soundin' in my ears! Dat begin to sound ha'nted, too. (*He gets to his feet, evidently slightly reassured by his prayer—with attempted confidence*) De Lawd'll preserve me from dem ha'nts after dis. (*Sits down on the stump again*) I ain't skeered o' real men. Let dem come. But dem odders— (*He shudders—then looks down at his feet, working his toes inside the shoes—with a groan*) Oh, my po' feet! Dem shoes ain't no use no more 'ceptin' to hurt. I'se better off widout dem. (*He unlaces them and pulls them off—holds the wrecks of the shoes in his hands and regards them mournfully*) You was real, A-one patin' leather, too. Look at you now. Emperor, you'se gittin' mighty low!

He sighs dejectedly and remains with bowed shoulders, staring down at the shoes in his hands as if reluctant to throw them away. While his attention is thus occupied, a crowd of figures silently enter the clearing from all sides. All are dressed in Southern costumes of the period of the fifties of the last century. There are middle-aged men who are evidently well-to-do planters. There is one spruce, authoritative individual—the AUCTIONEER. There is a crowd of curious spectators, chiefly young belles and dandies who have come to the slave market for diversion. All exchange courtly greetings in dumb show and chat silently together. There is something stiff, rigid, unreal, marionettish about their movements. They group themselves about the stump. Finally a batch of slaves is led in from the left by an at-

tendant—three men of different ages, two women, one with a baby in her arms, nursing. They are placed to the left of the stump, beside JONES.

The white planters look them over appraisingly as if they were cattle, and exchange judgments on each. The dandies point with their fingers and make witty remarks. The belles titter bewitchingly. All this in silence save for the ominous throb of the tom-tom. The AUCTIONEER holds up his hand, taking his place at the stump. The groups strain forward attentively. He touches JONES on the shoulder peremptorily, motioning for him to stand on the stump—the auction block.

JONES looks up, sees the figures on all sides, looks wildly for some opening to escape, sees none, screams and leaps madly to the top of the stump to get as far away from them as possible. He stands there, cowering, paralyzed with horror. The AUCTIONEER begins his silent spiel. He points to JONES, appeals to the planters to see for themselves. Here is a good field hand, sound in wind and limb as they can see. Very strong still in spite of his being middle aged. Look at that back. Look at those shoulders. Look at the muscles in his arms and his sturdy legs. Capable of any amount of hard labor. Moreover, of a good disposition, intelligent and tractable. Will any gentleman start the bidding? The PLANTERS raise their fingers, make their bids. They are apparently all eager to possess JONES. The bidding is lively, the crowd interested. While this has been going on, JONES has been seized by the courage of desperation. He dares to look down and around him. Over his face abject terror gives way to mystification, to gradual realization—stutteringly.

What you all doin', white folks? What's all dis? What you all lookin' at me fo'? What you doin' wid me, anyhow? (*Suddenly convulsed with raging hatred and fear*) Is dis a auction? Is you sellin' me like dey uester befo' de war? (*Jerking out his revolver just as the AUCTIONEER knocks him down to one of the planters—glaring from him to the purchaser*) And you sells me? And you buys me? I shows you I'se a free nigger, damn yo' souls! (*He fires at the AUCTIONEER and at the PLANTER with such rapidity that the two shots are almost simultaneous. As if this were a signal the walls of the forest fold in. Only blackness remains and silence broken by JONES as he rushes off, crying with fear—and by the quickened, ever louder beat of the tom-tom.*)

SCENE VI

A cleared space in the forest. The limbs of the trees meet over it forming a low ceiling about five feet from the ground. The interlocked ropes of creepers reaching upward to entwine the tree trunks give an arched appearance to the sides. The space thus enclosed is like the dark, noisome hold of some ancient vessel. The moonlight is almost completely shut out and only a vague wan light filters through. There is the noise of someone approaching from the left, stumbling and crawling through the undergrowth. JONES' voice is heard between chattering moans.

Oh, Lawd, what I gwine do now? Ain't got no bullet left on'y de silver one. If mo' o' dem ha'nts come after me, how I gwine skeer dem away? Oh, Lawd, on'y de silver one left—an' I gotta save dat fo' luck. If I shoots dat one I'm a goner sho'? Lawd, it's black heah! Whar's de moon? Oh, Lawd, don't dis night evah come to an end! (*By the sounds, he is feeling his way cautiously forward*) Dere! Dis feels like a clear space. I gotta lie down an' rest. I don't care if dem niggers does catch me. I gotta rest.

He is well forward now where his figure can be dimly made out. His pants have been so torn away that what is left of them is no better than a breech cloth. He flings himself full length, face downward on the ground, panting with exhaustion. Gradually it seems to grow lighter in the enclosed space and two rows of seated figures can be seen behind JONES. They are sitting in crumpled, despairing attitudes, hunched, facing one another with their backs touching the forest walls as if they were shackled to them. All are Negroes, naked save for loin cloths. At first they are silent and motionless. Then they begin to sway slowly forward toward each other and back again in unison, as if they were laxly letting themselves follow the long roll of a ship at sea. At the same time, a low, melancholy murmur rises among them, increasing gradually by rhythmic degrees, which seem to be directed and controlled by the throb of the tom-tom in the distance, to a long, tremulous wail of despair that reaches a certain pitch, unbearably acute, then falls by slow gradations of tone into silence and is taken up again. JONES starts, looks up, sees the figures, and throws himself down again to shut out the sight. A shudder of terror shakes his whole body as the wail rises up about him

again. But the next time, his voice, as if under some uncanny compulsion, starts with the others. As their chorus lifts he rises to a sitting posture similar to the others, swaying back and forth. His voice reaches the highest pitch of sorrow, of desolation. The light fades out, the other voices cease, and only darkness is left. JONES can be heard scrambling to his feet and running off, his voice sinking down the scale and receding as he moves farther and farther away in the forest. The tom-tom beats louder, quicker, with a more insistent, triumphant pulsation.

SCENE VII

The foot of a gigantic tree by the edge of a great river. A rough structure of boulders, like an altar, is by the tree. The raised riverbank is in the nearer background. Beyond this the surface of the river spreads out, brilliant and unruffled in the moonlight, blotted out and merged into a veil of bluish mist in the distance. JONES' voice is heard from the left rising and falling in the long, despairing wail of the chained slaves, to the rhythmic beat of the tom-tom. As his voice sinks into silence, he enters the open space. The expression of his face is fixed and stony, his eyes have an obsessed glare, he moves with a strange deliberation like a sleepwalker or one in a trance. He looks around at the tree, the rough stone altar, the moonlit surface of the river beyond, and passes his hand over his head with a vague gesture of puzzled bewilderment. Then, as if in obedience to some obscure impulse, he sinks into a kneeling, devotional posture before the altar. Then he seems to come to himself partly, to have an uncertain realization of what he is doing, for he straightens up and stares about him horrified—in an incoherent mumble.

What—what is I doin'? What is—dis place? Seems like I know dat tree—an' dem stones—an' de river. I remember—seems like I been heah befo'. (*Tremblingly*) Oh, Gorry, I'se skeered in dis place! I'se skeered. Oh, Lawd, perfect dis sinner!

Crawling away from the altar, he cowers close to the ground, his face hidden, his shoulders heaving with sobs of hysterical fright. From behind the trunk of the tree, as if he had sprung out of it, the figure of the CONGO WITCH DOCTOR appears. He is wizened and old, naked except for the fur of some small animal tied about his waist, its bushy tail hanging down in front. His body is stained all

over a bright red. Antelope horns are on each side of his head, branching upward. In one hand he carries a bone rattle, in the other a charm stick with a bunch of white cockatoo feathers tied to the end. A great number of glass beads and bone ornaments are about his neck, ears, wrists, and ankles. He struts noiselessly with a queer prancing step to a position in the clear ground between JONES and the altar. Then with a preliminary, summoning stamp of his foot on the earth, he begins to dance and to chant. As if in response to his summons the beating of the tom-tom grows to a fierce, exultant boom whose throbs seem to fill the air with vibrating rhythm. JONES looks up, starts to spring to his feet, reaches a half-kneeling, half-squatting position and remains rigidly fixed there, paralyzed with awed fascination by this new apparition. The WITCH DOCTOR sways, stamping with his foot, his bone rattle clicking the time. His voice rises and falls in a weird, monotonous croon, without articulate word divisions. Gradually his dance becomes clearly one of a narrative in pantomime, his croon is an incantation, a charm to allay the fierceness of some implacable deity demanding sacrifice. He flees, he is pursued by devils, he hides, he flees again. Ever wilder and wilder becomes his flight, nearer and nearer draws the pursuing evil, more and more the spirit of terror gains possession of him. His croon, rising to intensity, is punctuated by shrill cries. JONES has become completely hypnotized. His voice joins in the incantation, in the cries, he beats time with his hands and sways his body to and fro from the waist. The whole spirit and meaning of the dance has entered into him, has become his spirit. Finally the theme of the pantomime halts on a howl of despair, and is taken up again in a note of savage hope. There is a salvation. The forces of evil demand sacrifice. They must be appeased. The WITCH DOCTOR points with his wand to the sacred tree, to the river beyond, to the altar, and finally to JONES with a ferocious command. JONES seems to sense the meaning of this. It is he who must offer himself for sacrifice. He beats his forehead abjectly to the ground, moaning hysterically.

Mercy, Oh, Lawd! Mercy! Mercy on dis po' sinner.

The WITCH DOCTOR springs to the riverbank. He stretches out his arms and calls to some GOD within its depths. Then he starts backward slowly, his arms remaining out. A huge head of a CROCODILE appears over the bank and its eyes, glittering greenly, fasten upon JONES. He stares into them fascinatedly. The WITCH DOCTOR prances up to him, touches him with his wand, motions with hideous com-

mand toward the waiting monster. JONES squirms on his belly nearer and nearer, moaning continually.

Mercy, Lawd! Mercy!

The CROCODILE heaves more of his enormous hulk onto the land. JONES squirms toward him. The WITCH DOCTOR'S voice shrills out in furious exultation, the tom-tom beats madly. JONES cries out in a fierce, exhausted spasm of anguished pleading.

Lawd, save me! Lawd Jesus, heah my prayer!

Immediately, in answer to his prayer, comes the thought of the one bullet left him. He snatches at his hip, shouting defiantly.

De silver bullet! You don't git me yit!

He fires at the green eyes in front of him. The head of the CROCODILE sinks back behind the riverbank, the WITCH DOCTOR springs behind the sacred tree and disappears. JONES lies with his face to the ground, his arms outstretched, whimpering with fear as the throb of the tom-tom fills the silence about him with a somber pulsation, a baffled but revengeful power.

SCENE VIII

Dawn. Same as Scene II, the dividing line of forest and plain. The nearest tree trunks are dimly revealed but the forest behind them is still a mass of glooming shadow. The tom-tom seems on the very spot, so loud and continuously vibrating are its beats. LEM enters from the left, followed by a small squad of his soldiers, and by the cockney trader, SMITHERS. LEM is a heavy-set, ape-faced old savage of the extreme African type, dressed only in a loincloth. A revolver and cartridge belt are about his waist. His soldiers are in different degrees of rag-concealed nakedness. All wear broad palm-leaf hats. Each one carries a rifle. SMITHERS is the same as in Scene I. One of the soldiers, evidently a tracker, is peering about keenly on the ground. He points to the spot where JONES entered the forest. LEM and SMITHERS come to look.

Smithers (after a glance, turns away in disgust). That's where 'e went in right enough. Much good it'll do yer. 'E's miles orf by this an' safe to the Coast, damn 's 'ide! I tole yer yer'd lose im, didn't I?—wastin' the 'ole bloomin' night beatin' yer bloody drum and castin' yer silly spells! Gawd blimey, wot a pack!

Lem (gutturally). We catch him. (He makes a motion to his soldiers who squat down on their haunches in a semicircle.)

Smithers (exasperatedly). Well, ain't yer goin' in an' 'unt 'im in the woods? What the 'ell's the good of waitin'?

Lem (imperturbably—squatting down himself). We catch him.

Smithers (turning away from him contemptuously). Aw! Garn! 'E's a better man than the lot o' you put together. I 'ates the sight o' 'im but I'll say that for 'im. (A sound comes from the forest. The soldiers jump to their feet, cocking their rifles alertly. LEM remains sitting with an imperturbable expression, but listening intently. He makes a quick signal with his hand. His followers creep quickly into the forest, scattering so that each enters at a different spot.)

Smithers. You ain't thinkin' that would be 'im, I 'ope?

Lem (calmly). We catch him.

Smithers. Blarsted fat 'eads! (Then after a second's thought—wonderingly) Still an' all, it might 'appen. If 'e lost 'is bloody way in these stinkin' woods 'e'd likely turn in a circle without 'is knowin' it.

Lem (peremptorily). Sssh! (The reports of several rifles sound from the forest, followed a second later by savage, exultant yells. The beating of the tom-tom abruptly ceases. LEM looks up at the white man with a grin of satisfaction) We catch him. Him dead.

Smithers (with a snarl). 'Ow d'yer know it's 'im an' 'ow d'yer know 'e's dead?

Lem. My mens dey got um silver bullets. Lead bullet no kill him. He got um strong charm. I cook um money, make um silver bullet, make um strong charm, too.

Smithers (astonished). So that's wot you was up to all night, wot? You was scared to put after 'im till you'd moulded silver bullets, eh?

Lem (simply stating a fact). Yes. Him got strong charm. Lead no good.

Smithers (slapping his thigh and guffawing). Haw-haw! If yer don't beat all 'ell! (Then recovering himself—scornfully) I'll bet yer it ain't 'im they shot at all, yer bleedin' looney!

Lem (calmly). Dey come bring him now. (The soldiers come out of the forest, carrying JONES' limp body. He is dead. They carry him to LEM, who examines his body with great satisfaction.)

Smithers (leans over his shoulder—in a tone of frightened awe). Well, they did for yer right enough, Jonesey, me lad! Dead as a 'erring! (Mockingly) Where's yer 'igh an' mighty airs now, yer bloomin' Majesty? (Then with a grin) Silver bullets! Gawd blimey, but yer died in the 'eighth o' style, any'ow!

